

# **What Were the Causes and Consequences of the April 12, 2011, Uprising in Swaziland?**

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## **Abstract**

*Swaziland faces a number of problems with its current system of governance and a political change leaning towards a democracy seems likely, but poses a great challenge for opposition parties. The Swazi monarchy is the only remaining absolute monarchy in Africa and what is of particular interest for this dissertation, is the significance and impact of the April 12, 2011 Uprising that took place in the country; its causes and consequences. Importantly, this dissertation seeks to find solid reasoning behind the failure of the uprising. This dissertation will offer a detailed recount of the events that took place from before the scheduled day of the uprising, during the uprising and also consider the aftermath. More research still has to be done and more questions have to be asked in order to open up opportunity for more literature to be written on Swaziland. This research also seeks to explore ways in which the context of Swaziland can be better understood, especially with regards to how one makes sense of what really happened on April 12, 2011. Theories of revolutions and the revolutions of the Arab Spring will be drawn in as a point of reference for the case of Swaziland. On a larger scale, this research also seeks to make a contribution to the literature written on Swaziland.*

## **Declaration**

I know that plagiarism is wrong. Plagiarism is to use another's work and pretend that it is one's own.

This dissertation is my own work, submitted for the degree of Master of Arts (Political Studies) in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination in this or any other university.

Signature..... N. Mkhathshwa

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## CONTENTS PAGE

ABSTRACT:	i
DECLARATION:	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:	iii
CONTENTS PAGE:	iv
ACRONYMS:	vi

CHAPTER ONE: <b>Introduction-</b> The Swazi Uprising	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Why a case-study of Swaziland?</li><li>- Research questions</li><li>- Theoretical framework</li><li>- Methodology</li><li>- Challenges</li><li>- Interviews</li><li>- Chapter Structure</li></ul>	
CHAPTER TWO: <b>Theorizing Revolutions</b> – Successful Revolutions: Theories	13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The Arab Spring</li><li>- Southern African Democratic Movements of the 1990s</li></ul>	
CHAPTER THREE: <b>A Political History of Swaziland</b>	34
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Emergence of the Swazi State</li><li>- Swaziland's Relationship with South Africa</li><li>- Leading to Independence</li><li>- After Independence</li><li>- The New Political Structure</li></ul>	

- The Labour Movement
- Tinkhundla System
- Tradition
- Religion
- Swaziland under King Mswati III

**CHAPTER FOUR: The Swazi Uprising – Leading to the Uprising 66**

- Interviewee Experience
- Day of Uprising
- Reasons for the Unsuccessful Uprising

**CHAPTER FIVE: The Aftermath – After the Uprising and Lessons Learnt 89**

- A possible future for Swaziland

**CHAPTER SIX: Conclusion 102**

**APPENDICES: 109**

**REFERENCES : 113**

## **Acronyms**

**ANC- African National Congress**

**ILO- International Labour Organisation**

**IMF- International Monetary Fund**

**INM- Imbokodvo National Movement**

**NNLC- Ngwane National Liberatory Congress**

**OAU- Organisation of African Unity**

**ODA- Official Development Assistance**

**PUDEMO- Peoples United Democratic Movement**

**SCCCO- Swaziland Coalition of Concerned Civic Organisation**

**SFL- Swaziland Federation of Labour**

**SFTU- Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions**

**SNC- Swazi National Council**

**SNL- Swazi National Land**

**SNUS- Swaziland National Union of Students**

**SNUT- Swaziland National Union of Teachers**

**SUDF- Swaziland Democratic Front**

**SWAYOCO- Swaziland Youth Congress**

**UNISWA- University of Swaziland**

**USA- United Swaziland Association**

**USDF- Umbutfo Swaziland Defence Force**

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **Introduction**

This dissertation is a case study of the April 12 Uprising which happened in Swaziland in 2011. The April 12 Uprising was established by a said “Jahings Dada” (pseudonym), who initiated the movement online on Facebook (Kenworthy, 2010). The description offered by the Facebook group was that their agenda was mainly to make their demands heard and thereafter responded to accordingly; to have the King of Swaziland give up his seat of power, do away with the unjust constitution and have power immediately given to an elected transition government. They stated that their inspiration and motivation to topple the monarchy, came from the North African uprisings in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya and also, that the collapse of the Swazi economy had been one of the main triggers that motivated the call for an uprising (“April 12 Swazi Uprising !!!”, Facebook).

## **The Swazi Uprising**

On the said date, many hopeful democrats made all efforts to enter city centers, specifically in the two main towns of Swaziland, Manzini and Mbabane (the capital city), in an effort to begin demonstrations that were aimed at overthrowing the current regime of the Kingdom of Swaziland, along with the king himself. Many of the people that had planned to partake and be a part of the demonstrations were blocked by heightened security that spread all over the country. Police forces, soldiers and even warders were unleashed by the state to crush the demonstrations and gatherings that people had planned. The day of the uprising resulted in a mass of people being detained throughout April 12. People that were detained included key figures of the democratic movement, which made up the leadership of the uprising. People were easily abducted from the streets and thrown into police vans and trucks. These vehicles drove around the country with the people and dropped them off at places that were far from their usual locations and that were unknown to them. They were left to find their way back to their homes. The state made all efforts to derail the plans of the democratic movement, which was to force the king of Swaziland off the seat of power and further do away with the political system of Swaziland; deemed unjust, nepotistic and exclusive (Times of Swaziland, 2011; March and April).



It was of course possible and made simpler for the Swazi regime to prepare well and way before hand, for the April 12, 2011, uprising. The Uprising had been announced online, through the creation of a Facebook page. When the media in South Africa paid attention to the page and began to make headlines regarding the looming uprising in Swaziland, the media in Swaziland caught on and announced the looming threat to the state. With an almost immediate response from the state, the budget for the army increased in 2011 and a significant portion of the army was subsequently sent away for training. Government officials and especially the Prime Minister, Barnabas Dlamini issued threats to the people; that they would severely punish anyone even remotely suspected to be involved in the organizing of the said uprising. On the ground, police intimidated citizens in various ways, presenting an immediate challenge to the democratic movement as it faced difficulties with galvanizing support within Swaziland (“April 12 Swazi Uprising !!!”, Facebook; Times of Swaziland, 2011; March and April). In this dissertation I argue that it was this initial announcement of an uprising that marked the initial failure of the movement. It served more to prepare the state to crush the uprising and strengthen its hold to power.

### **Why a case study of Swaziland?**

This specific case study of the Swazi Uprising, as an area of research to write a dissertation on, is important. Firstly, for the reason that the uprising in Swaziland has not been specifically addressed (in my background reading and research of the literature on this topic, I have not come across research that specifically addresses the issues I want to tackle in this research). The April 12 Uprising is an important event, specifically in the history of Swaziland. In as much as the Swazi Uprising did not attract much international media coverage and attention, this dissertation is of the opinion that for the small country that Swaziland is and for the exclusivity of its system of governance, it is important that this portion of history is researched and documented. Much more research still has to be done and more questions have to be asked in order to open up opportunity for more literature to be written on Swaziland and also to allow for more literature that can be used by society to make better sense of the context of the Swazi struggle. The uprising may have not been loud enough to shake grounds outside of the country but it is again the opinion of this dissertation that it was profound in shaping Swaziland into what it is today and the attitudes of both of those who are for and against the monarchy.

On a larger scale, this research topic is important because it speaks to the prospects and possibilities of a democratic transition in Swaziland; it speaks to the unchanging political system in Swaziland (despite the turning point of most African countries in the 1990s, which saw democratic political changes that had states subscribe to multiparty democracy). The importance and significance of this research dissertation also speaks to the nature of revolutions; why and how they occur; what factors account for successful revolutions and why some other revolutions do not succeed. Swaziland is a unique focus point as it exists within a highly intricate traditional system of governance that controls people from high up in parliament and into their homesteads. This dissertation also brings out the argument that a serious challenge to a revolution in Swaziland is the strong state that the monarchy is.

## **Research Questions**

The central research question for this research is, as stated on the cover page, “What were the causes and consequences of the April 12 Uprising in Swaziland?” The phrasing of this main research question was made broad to allow different views that feed into the understanding of how one makes sense of what happened in Swaziland on April 12 2011. What this dissertation ultimately seeks to respond to is this question: “Why did the revolution in Swaziland fail?” Having to consider the causes and consequences of the uprising allows us to zoom in on the motivating factors of the uprising and their subsequent impact on the sphere of the small country, in the broadest of ways, which accommodates multiple perspectives of reasoning. Supplementary questions that will help guide the types of concerns and that this dissertation will respond to are as follows:

1. Why April 12, 2011- what is significant about this particular date?
2. What role did the different types of media– print, internet and other forms of communication- play in the uprising?
3. What were the immediate consequences of the uprising in Swaziland?
4. Considering some successful North African revolutions (Egypt, Tunisia and Libya) as examples, what would result in a successful revolution in Swaziland?
5. What lesson does the case of Swaziland teach about the emergence of social movements?

It is important to establish the significance of the date chosen for the uprising to take place as it further informs us on what more motivated the demonstrators to confront the state and as well on when it began for the movement. A look back into history will assist in discovering this crucial information.

The media in Swaziland is largely owned and funded by the state. Although the dominant newspaper, the Times of Swaziland is privately owned, it still has many restrictions on how far it can go in criticizing government/the monarchy and royalty. Even this publication treads carefully in order to avoid being banned or fined for bad publicity of the country. With respect to the uprising, the media was seen to be very effective in firstly, getting word out about a looming uprising and secondly, in warning the public about partaking in the planned demonstrations. What one saw in the media was that it issued out more statements from government and authorities of the regime. Very little space was given for the views of the democratic movement, and especially on what their vision was for Swaziland, and so what the democratic movement did was it used the online space. In later chapters this will be discussed fully after considering the events of the uprising and its impact on the Swazi sphere.

Important to consider as well will be the lessons learnt following the uprising and what such an event meant for Swaziland. Considering the revolutions of the Arab Spring will allow this dissertation to have some kind of a reference point as to what constitutes successful revolutions. This also allows us to then look at the case of Swaziland in comparison to Libya, Egypt and Tunisia, and try to distinguish a working analysis of what happened in Swaziland. Theories of revolutions will as well be considered in providing some guidelines of how to better make sense of the same case and also the democracies of sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s. Lessons will be teased out in chapter four, with the detailing of successes and failures of the uprising, which then speaks to the nature of revolutions and as well, the emergence of social movements.

## **Theoretical framework**

Theories of revolutions have been considered by this dissertation in attempt to offer a working definition and reasons of how and why revolutions succeed or fail. John Foran's (2005) theorization of revolutions has appealed mostly to this dissertation as it successfully

points out a lot of factors that motivate for a successful revolution- and it is these factors that are also evident in the Swazi context. The type of factors that Foran identifies as contributing elements to successful revolutions are the same as those Swaziland was confronted with leading towards the uprising and also recounted by the interviewees of this dissertation. Foran observes firstly that Third World revolutions are rare and that even when they do occur, they are quickly crushed by the state which in its character and nature is repressive. Chapter two and chapter three will reveal this very characteristic of the Swazi state and this truth to repression. Foran lines up factors that are altogether sufficient to produce a successful revolution and the very same conditions are found in the Swazi context. Whilst the elements in Foran's theory are useful in bringing understanding and making the case of Swaziland a given foundation for a successful revolution, the question remains on why the revolution in Swaziland failed. Foran's theory states that with the prominence of these issues, revolts occur which see rapid transformations to state structures and class structures. What then becomes interesting to look at and question, is why sudden revolts did not occur in Swaziland and that even when they did eventually occur, why were they not successful? Foran's theory has however been useful in bringing about the understanding of different forces working together in seeing a revolutionary transition in a given state and importantly, being able to highlight that the reason that most revolutions in Third World countries have suffered, is due to repressive states- we can already assign this initial and significant reasoning to the case of Swaziland although of course, it is far from being sufficient and responding to the guiding question of "why the revolution in Swaziland failed?"

## **Methodology**

As stated earlier, this research is a case study of a particular event, the April 12, 2011 uprising in Swaziland. The single case study method was selected because it demands a close-up and in-depth understanding of a given case in which data is collected, analyzed and thereafter have the findings reported. This is essentially what the researcher sought to do with this research; to work with a method which accommodated a closeness which would produce a deep understanding and an insightful appreciation of the case study, especially if the case has been so often overlooked (as is the case with Swaziland as a country and the uprising), which is the case in question. Creswell (2009) and Bromley (1986) both agree that the case study method is a powerful research strategy or approach; an empirical inquiry that

investigates phenomenon within its real life context. It is my belief that this research method was best to serve the nature of this research topic.

One of the other methods that this dissertation used in responding to the research question is the method of document analysis. Through this method, this dissertation was able to review existing written material (secondary sources), which provided insights into various aspects of the research question. This secondary material also included Swazi and South African newspapers. Newsletters and pamphlets were also used as sources of information. The library was a useful resource, although with very little written on the uprising and even broadly, on Swaziland. Internet sources, however, have shown to be much more useful, especially Facebook. The uprising was administered on Facebook, and almost all of the democratic movements in Swaziland have a strong online presence. A lot of the information came from articles posted on the various Facebook platforms in which the different groups have accounts and share information on.

The snowball sampling technique rescued the diminishing number of interviewees (due to challenges stated below); each interview was followed by referrals, most were successful and few unsuccessful. The result was seventeen interview participants. It was anticipated by this dissertation that interviews would most probably be difficult to conduct because of the political situation in Swaziland; there being a high censorship of people, and the feeling of having “ears and eyes” everywhere. There was also the issue of trust and having to assure interviewees that they would not land in any danger or compromising situations. It was also anticipated that participants would want to claim anonymity- this was prepared for and consent forms were generated, which allowed the participants to clearly state whether or not they wanted to claim the status of anonymity- confidentiality was assured. Interviews were also requested to have recorded for accuracy when reporting on information gathered. A consent form and participation information sheet was generated and submitted together with an ethics clearance application, which was approved by the ethics committee at the University of the Witwatersrand, following numerous vigorous edits and re-working of the forms. It was established that this research topic was a risky endeavour which would potentially put the interviewees at risk and as well as the researcher. Specific attention was paid to the detail of the consent form, participation information sheet and the storing of data collected (these documents show how ethical issues were dealt with, how confidentiality was ensured etc., and are attached in the appendices of this dissertation). Ethics were considered for this research to ensure that those involved in the research including the investigator would

be protected from being known through the agreement of confidentiality that both parties signed on (Longman, 1991). Privacy, confidentiality and data protection were crucial at all stages of the research process.

## **Challenges**

Significant to highlight at this point, is the initial challenge and limitation that this type of project was and is still met with. Teresa M. Debly, author of a paper titled *Culture and Resistance: Swaziland 1960-2011*, clearly relates the difficulty of finding relevant material when conducting research on Swaziland. Debly cites Alan Booth who noted the lack of research done on Swaziland, and John Daniel who recognized a “near dearth of serious scholarly writing by Swazi social scientists,” (quoted in Debly, 2011). Debly recalls Balam Nyeko who criticizes some of the available material and states that studies on the history and culture of Swaziland have been stifled by a concentration on the “Swazi way” which sees the aristocracy portraying itself as exclusive and therefore presents the country as not being a part of a wider world. Recent scholarship has however surfaced and filled in some gaps on the literature of Swaziland (Debly, 2011).

Most of the recent scholarship, although not in abundance, provides work that compliments each other and so in this case, one does not necessarily come across competing ideas on the discourse of Swazi politics but that rather, each piece of research reveals new aspects of the character of Swaziland’s monarchy and its influence. A couple of papers have been the source of inspiration for this dissertation. The bulk of the information relating to the uprising comes from various online and printed newspapers that have reported on the event. More information was retrieved from social media pages, pamphlets that were distributed about the uprising and filings made by each union, group and political party involved in the uprising.

Conducting this research inside the borders of Swaziland proved to be both tricky and very risky. The National Archives of Swaziland had been considered as a possibly resourceful place to carry out some research in. The challenge there was (and is) the censorship of what research can be done. It required a form to be completed detailing the research that one is to carry-out and one also has to further sign an agreement to send the dissertation to the Swaziland National Archives upon completion (the duration of the research has to be provided or an estimation of it has to be provided so that it is clear when it can be

anticipated). The form demands the names of supervisors and other names that are part of the work. The person conducting the research has to provide specific details on whom they are and where they are from. Whilst this may be the norm of such institutions, the researcher saw it as a risk to commit to sending back a dissertation that was not necessarily in favour of the current regime but that questioned existing structures.

If you are a Swazi national, you go as far as giving the name of the chief and *indvuna* of your home area (this is significant as it makes you easily traceable). The chief of any given area is loyal to the king and with that, is aware of every homestead on the land under his jurisdiction. The detail and significance of this will be better understood in chapter two, in the discussion of the Swazi political system of government. Conducting the research directly at individual media houses such as The Times of Swaziland and The Observer, was also deemed as risky; people ask questions and can quickly become suspicious when certain topics are raised; The Observer is funded by the state and The Times of Swaziland is privately owned, but even so, they are still restricted in their criticism of the state. Both of the above mentioned newspapers have websites that were useful in gathering some research information but what was challenging was the navigation of the websites; their online archives are not easily accessible so one has to begin by searching on Google for related headings and then perhaps, the relevant article(s) would come up and then link to the websites of the publications. The radio station (Swaziland Broadcasting Information Services) and television station (Swazi TV) in Swaziland are owned and also funded by the state. Conducting research there and inquiring after information regarding the uprising would have also proven to be very risky. Xolani Simelane (2007) also reiterates this point and states that the danger in Swaziland is that the royal family owns all media houses- “either wholly or partially.”

What was most significant to then begin with was identifying the relevant people with which to talk to and get important and equally significant information from. Having served in organizations such as the Swaziland Diaspora Platform, which are based in South Africa, I had the privilege of meeting members of banned parties in Swaziland, journalists, exiles and people that stood up against the current regime in Swaziland. The first contact made was with Manqoba Nxumalo, a Swazi journalist now working in South Africa, who provided names of key people to talk to. Linking with relevant people was easy enough, but the challenge lay with the people's willingness to speak to the concerns of this dissertation. Most people declined participation from the beginning whilst others declined at the last minute having previously scheduled an interview. There was therefore a great challenge in finding

alternative people to interview and those who would be willing to speak to the concerns of this dissertation.

With the reality of having very little resources to work with when researching anything on Swaziland and more specifically when researching recent events, this dissertation has had to therefore rely heavily on interviews with people who were actively involved in the inception and running of the uprising, in order to gather up information that responds to the central research question of this dissertation. The list of interviewees is below:

<b>Name/Reference</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Place</b>
1 AnonymousJTS	January 2014	Swaziland
2 Anonymous1	2011	Swaziland
3 Anonymous2	2011	Swaziland
4 Anonymous 3	2011	Swaziland
5 AnonymousBN	December 2013	Swaziland
6 Manqoba Nxumalo	October/November 2013	South Africa
7 Pius Vilakati	December 2013	South Africa
8 Reuben Van Vuuren	December 2013	South Africa
9 Philile Masango	December 2013	South Africa
10 Musa Hlophe	December 2013	Swaziland
11 Maxwell Dlamini	December 2013	Swaziland
12 Palesa Dlamini	January 2014	Swaziland
13 Musa Sifundza	January 2014	Swaziland
14 Wandile Dlodlu	January 2014	Swaziland
15 Mlungisi Makhanya	January 2014	South Africa
16 Zwakele Nsibande	January 2014	South Africa
17 Bongani Masuku	January 2014	South Africa

## **Interviews**

The types of questions asked initially began with light questions which served to ease the participant into the conversation of the actual uprising and their involvement. A total of sixteen questions were put together and posed to each participant. The goal of each interview



was to firstly, find out the level of involvement of each interviewee in the uprising and its organization, secondly, decipher what factors or problems characterized the road leading to the day of the uprising, what happened on the day of the uprising and the aftermath. Significantly as well, was to determine each interviewee's interpretation of what happened in Swaziland on April 12, 2011. The questions were semi-structured in order to accommodate a structure and order to the direction of the interview session, which was also planned to be conversational in nature (the question sheet is also attached in the appendix). Participants for this study were generally willing to tell their stories and experiences, regardless of the potential risks that may have been anticipated. Fieldwork took place in both Swaziland and South Africa between October 2013 and February 2014. It was easier to speak to people in South Africa, some exiled and others that relocated and now work in South Africa. The greatest challenge with conducting interviews in Swaziland was that almost all of the key figures that were interviewed, were (and still are) censored by the state. Their phones are hacked into and so even phones conversation are accessed by the regime. The researcher thus had to carefully structure phone conversations and immediately divert to texting and making use of chat applications. Some interviewees were reached through email. Meetings varied. Some were held in public spaces whilst others were held in private and far off places. The willingness of each interviewee was advantageous in the success of the interviews conducted.

The researcher made a conscious effort to be neutral and non-judgmental during interviews. In analyzing and reporting the findings from interviewees, inconsistencies were detected; for instance, the fact that there was no clearly defined leadership of the uprising surfaced as a contentious issue. It became clear with each interviewee that the uprising did actually have a leadership, that not coming out with an obvious leadership was a media strategy by the leadership itself to allow an unrestricted participation in the protest marches. It was clear as well that the uprising was a Pudemmo (Peoples Democratic Movement) initiation. Why this strategy of claiming to have no leadership was opted for, will be explored in later chapters and will perhaps become evident in the second chapter as the political history of Swaziland is elaborated and also, with each interview shared.

## **Chapter Structure**

The chapters of this dissertation have been divided into four chapters as illustrated below. Chapter one, Theorizing Revolutions: the guiding question here is, "How do we explain what

happened in April 12, 2011, in Swaziland?” And in theorizing revolutions, the aim is to better make sense of the events that took place in Swaziland on the said date. It is important that the successful revolutions in North Africa be considered as the uprising in Swaziland took place at around the same time, in 2011, and the leadership of the Swazi Uprising claims to have been inspired by the events of the Arab Spring. What becomes clear is that the political system of Swaziland proves to be both exclusive and intricate and challenges basic understanding of why and how revolutions occur. What we will see is that Swaziland, according to the theories, presented itself as ripe ground onto which a revolution would occur and yet the attempt at a revolution did not succeed. This chapter suggests that a deeper question lies in the Swazi state, and that a deeper understanding of the structure of the Swazi regime needs to be probed into and made sense of in order to understand the turn-out of events of the uprising. A review of sub-Saharan African democracies of the 1990s should also help us with a broader understanding of the struggle for democracy in Swaziland. Importantly, we are to remain cognizant of the guiding question that falls into every chapter; why did the revolution not succeed in Swaziland? This chapter argues against the perception of Swaziland as a weak state and motivates for the roles of the working class and trade unions in the creation of a necessary national movement in the struggle of the Swazi people.

Chapter two, Political History of Swaziland: this section will consider a brief history of Swaziland along with the establishment of the monarchy. This section will look into how the Swazi government is structured and how it operates through institutions such as the *Tinkhundla* system (the parliamentary electoral system of Swaziland) and *Tibiyo takaNgwane* (a supposed trust fund for the nation that is controlled by the monarchy), which constitute the power of the monarchy and its control. This chapter serves to give us context of the Swazi regime and to further delve into the historical entrenchment of the Swazi monarchy and the injustices that the progressive movement challenges and is as well challenged by. The character and nature of the monarchy will be revealed. It comes out that it is important for the opposition movement to understand the strength and resilience of the Swazi regime. This chapter argues against a quick suggestion of South African intervention in the case of Swaziland, it argues that the opposition movement needs to spend time in strategizing and working hard if they are to have any impact in Swaziland. Tradition surfaces as an important aspect to consider in the construction of the *tinkhundla* system and also its manipulation alongside religion.

Chapter three, The Swazi Uprising: This chapter will look into the activity that led to the uprising. The political atmosphere will be analyzed, influencers of the uprising, the economy of Swaziland, the demonstrations that took place, police activity, government activity and its interactions with the democratic movement will also be analyzed. This chapter will reveal once again the character of the Swazi regime and further argue that the system is both intricate and exclusive and that roles of culture and religion contribute to the status quo which in turn makes an overthrow of the regime a more complex endeavour of the progressive movement, than can be understood by mere notions of how and when revolutions occur. This section will also relate the events of the day of the uprising, detailing all the activity and the direction that the demonstrations took. The principal argument of this chapter is that although Swaziland presents a perfect case in which a revolution can be realized, a huge challenge to a successful transition to a democratic dispensation is the strong and resilient Swazi state which still shows no signs of weaknesses which would make it susceptible for overthrow, despite the many problems that it faces. Opposition forces cannot bank on the international community to exert pressure on Swaziland to transform its political institutions; they will have to put in solid work into establishing a formidable national movement and carefully strategize a method to overwhelm the regime's institutions and establish a democratic country with new and relevant institutions.

Chapter four, The Aftermath: this chapter will look at what happened after the uprising; its successes and failures. This chapter will also consider what possible future Swaziland may have; whether or not political/democratic change is feasible for the near or distant future in Swaziland. The argument continues in this chapter, that of culture and religion making the Swazi context more complex and in essence defining it. And that in turn, the liberation movement has to make an added effort to ask important questions and find answers to them in order to make clear headway in their struggle. A couple of arguments come out of this chapter: firstly, that the brutality of the Swazi regime largely contributed to the failure of the Swazi revolution. Secondly, that the announcement of a 'looming' uprising marked the initial failure of the uprising. Thirdly, I suggest that the establishment of a strong national movement that incorporates significant groups in the Swazi society (i.e. the peasantry), would be very significant for the opposition movement to strengthen itself and become truly broad-based.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THEORIZING REVOLUTIONS**

The Swazi 12 April Uprising was a clear failure and we need to understand why it failed given the moment when there was an Arab Spring. It is important for this dissertation to consider the revolutions of the Arab Spring because what makes the case of Swaziland particularly interesting is precisely that the uprising happens at the time of the Arab Spring and that the youth behind the Swazi Uprising claim the North African revolutions to have inspired their plight. And perhaps the bigger question is whether or not the Swazi case presented a real and solid revolutionary movement or a mere adventure; was it a group of youth who were over-zealous and thought they could have an uprising against the state? Was it an advantageous tactic during the period of global uncertainty? This chapter will respond to these questions. This chapter is organized into three sections.

In the first section I explore theories of revolutions which look into the reasoning behind why some revolutions succeed and as well why others fail. In this section I argue that the theories of revolution afford us only an understanding of revolutions and do not necessarily guide us into understanding the dynamics of the failed Swazi revolution and that a deeper interrogation of the system of governance in Swaziland is necessary. In the second section, I consider the revolutions of the Arab Spring as examples of revolutions that were initially seen as successful. Although similarities are notable between the struggle of the Swazi people and that of the youth of the North African uprisings, I argue in that unlike Egypt, Libya and Tunisia, the Swazi state did not experience a weakening of its institutions as a result of either domestic or international pressures, that it in fact retained its strength and resilience. In the last section, the broader struggle for democracy in Swaziland is probed into through the offering of a review of the Southern African democratic movements of the 1990s and this should help us with a broader understanding of what happened in Swaziland in 2011. We have to further understand the extent to which the democratic movement had been able to organize and mobilize the population prior to the said date of the uprising- of importance in this chapter is the idea of the significance of political organization or oppositional organization.

## **Successful Revolutions: Theories**

Thinkers and researchers of revolutions have taken to critically engage with theoretical approaches within which revolutions could be better made sense of. To begin with will be John Foran's theorization of revolutions. John Foran's (2005) "Taking Power", analyses what causes revolutions in the Third World, 20th Century. He consciously moves from what he presumes to be the usual and anticipated focus of scholars studying revolutions- that of classic/great revolutions of the West- and considers revolutions of Third World Countries. However, the countries he assesses are not African countries but he does offer interesting reasoning that is quite enlightening on why generally some revolutions have succeeded and why others have not. He states that Third World revolutions have been very rare and even when they have occurred, they have been aborted or reversed due to the repressive nature of Third World countries. He sites that "1. dependent development, 2. repressive, exclusionary, personalist state, 3. elaboration of effective and powerful political culture, 4. crisis arising from economic downturn and 5. a world systemic opening", are factors that are altogether good enough to produce a successful revolution. Foran suggests that successful revolutions develop within a centralized and organized force such as a post-revolutionary state which would also serve to guide it (the country seeking to revolutionize) and as well protect it. He insists that a significant degree of centralism is necessary for a revolution to succeed. Foran adopts the below quote as his working definition in his book, by Theda Skocpol: "Social revolutions are rapid, basic transformations of a society's state and class structures; and they are accompanied and in part carried through by class-based revolts from below... What is unique to social revolution is that basic changes in social structure and in political structure occur together in a mutually reinforcing fashion. And these changes occur through intense socio-political conflicts in which class struggles play a key role" (Foran, 2005). As this dissertation will discuss later in this chapter and in subsequent ones, Foran's theory easily depicts the case of Swaziland and as well brings out important questions that require sufficient exploring; for instance, if indeed Swaziland possessed and still possesses all the factors that Foran states to be good enough to produce a successful revolution, why has there not been a successful revolution?

Theda Skocpol sites four factors that explain social revolutions; state social structures, international competitive pressures, international demonstration effects and class relations. She argues that the theories that are common in political science fall short of a significant element on revolutions, which is therefore as a result of their failure to make sense of

“structural forces” that motivate for a revolution. Skocpol therefore approaches theorizing revolutions from a structural perspective. According to Skocpol, there has to be a breakdown of administrative and military power of a state before a social revolution can occur. Her description of what a social revolution is that it encompasses both a change in state institutions and a change in social structures. She makes one understand the fundamental differences between a political revolution and a social revolution; she states that a political revolution does very little to change social structures whereas a social revolution sees a change in both state institutions and the entire social order (Skocpol, 1979).

For a revolutionary situation to be, Theda Skocpol states that two factors are together “sufficient” for a “social revolution” to occur. This is explained to be a “deterministic” theory, which states that in any case in which the two structural variables are present, a revolution should therefore occur. The first of these variables is that there must first be a “crisis of state” which is usually motivated by international factors (perhaps from economic/security pressures or competition). Due to constraints and/or failures of the state, factions may develop within elites in finding solutions and these factions may become the very reason for the weakening of the regime. It is this “state crisis” that creates the revolutionary condition. The second of these variables is the “patterns of class dominance” which determines who or which group will rise to the occasion and seize the revolutionary moment. With both variables being present, the result will be what Skocpol refers to as a “social revolution”. She states that the political and social structures reinforce each other as the changes occur through intense socio-political conflict; with that, a social revolution is realized (Skocpol, 1979; Richards, 1980). Skocpol’s theory may not necessarily capture the conditions of the Swazi Uprising. What we saw with the Swazi struggle was not a breakdown of administrative and military power but rather a group of pro-democracy masses that took to challenge the current regime. The ground for a revolution was not made ripe by such conditions as mentioned by Skocpol and we may argue that with the absence of the ingredients that she identifies, a successful revolution is unlikely to take place. Perhaps one could site one of her conditions; that of a state crisis, accept that there was no international motivation/pressure on the case of Swaziland. Swaziland was denied loans by the IMF and neighbouring South Africa but the crisis was more internal as it saw civil servants, teachers and students on the streets, demonstrating against the failing economic system.

Stephen Walt defines a revolution as “the destruction of an existing state by members of its own society, followed by the creation of a new political order.” He is of the opinion that

revolutions present more than mere cases of administrative rearrangements of apparatus or a simple change in rules by the “old elite.” He says that, instead, a revolution turns the state around completely and changes its institutions fundamentally and has the state based on new values, social classes and political institutions. He continues to say that revolutions shape national identities and set the parameters of political activity and that at the core of it all, a revolution distinguishes “the basic nature of a polity.” Walt says that revolutions exist in two basic types; mass revolutions and elite revolutions. Mass revolutions usually involve the participation of previously marginalized groups or individuals who will see to it that the old regime is done away with. An elite revolution involves the participation of a group of leaders who may have broken away from the old regime, who come together to challenge the existing regime and take over in the belief that they can better take care of national interest. Elite revolutions are less violent than mass revolutions; their international consequences are as well much less alarming than that of mass revolutions (Walt, 1996). What we see in Swaziland is a potential mass revolution and no light of an elite revolution. This shows little chances of a revolution in the case of Swaziland. Perhaps the question raised by all of the above mentioned theorists is: “Can we call what happened in Swaziland on April 12, 2011, a revolution?” And how does one indeed explain what happened in Swaziland? These questions will be better responded to through each following chapter as the political structure of Swaziland will be laid out and the events of the said uprising, retold with the aid of the leadership and active participants of the events of the April 12, 2011, revolt.

Ideally, the main objective of a revolutionary struggle is to gain full control of the state and according to Walt, a “revolutionary situation” comes into being when “control of the government becomes the object of effective, competing, mutually exclusive claims on the part of two or more distinct polities.” Perhaps this definition can be linked to the second variable (that ensures a “revolutionary situation”) mentioned in Theda Skocpol’s “deterministic” theory; “patterns of class dominance which determine who or which group will rise to the occasion and seize the revolutionary moment.” The “two or more distinct polities” that come to compete over that control of the government could supposedly come to depict ‘the group that rises to the occasion’, having a specific form of government, and seizes the revolutionary moment. The converging point between the two authors is of course that for Skocpol, the one variable, on its own, is not sufficient to realize a revolutionary situation (Skocpol, 1979; Walt, 1996). When the old regime is defeated and is replaced by a

completely new and different political order, it is then that a “revolutionary outcome” will occur (Walt, 1996).

Interestingly enough, and although he admits that conditions for revolutions will vary, Walt states that almost all revolutions have common features. The first of these is when a combination of internal and external challenges weigh-down and weaken the existing “administrative and coercive capacities” of the state. This is what Skocpol would refer to as “a crisis of state.” Secondly, in either the elite or mass revolution, there is usually an explosion of political activity which may involve illegal methods and undertakings as the regime being threatened to be removed has no accommodating institutions and regulations in place. Thirdly, Walt also notes that a commonality about revolutions is that they tend to change the political discourse of that given state and usher in new ways of perceiving one’s context, through “new symbols and social customs.” Fourthly, revolutions tend to change the principles that once governed the state and especially those that set out how leaders are selected; often what will happen is that patrons of the old regime will be excluded and new leaders will be selected from previously marginalized groups- the revolution essentially redefines the political community. Lastly, revolutions are violent. A great deal of force and armed people come together to oust the existing regime and even if in some cases there isn’t much fighting in the ousting of the regime, violent struggles are witnessed between different groups (it is important to highlight here the lack of violence by prospective revolutionaries in the Swazi case. This may speak to the level of force that the opposition have when confronting the state). Redefining the political community puts every life at risk therefore no one is guaranteed any safety. There are often high levels of insecurity and fear. Revolutions result in many deaths; they are violent and cause irreparable damage (Walt, 1996).

Walt also tends to reiterate Foran (2005), by stating that revolutions are rare (although he is not specific to the Third World context), as states usually possess and have better access to means of violence which they can use to push back or destroy challengers of the regime. So essentially, most of these revolutions are quickly aborted or hushed down and the results are often that leaders of revolutions end up in jail or in exile. It is often a wonder when revolutions succeed (Walt, 1996). This resonates quite fittingly with the case of Swaziland as the state showed to be much more equipped and stronger than the democratic movement, making it easier for them (the state) to crush the demonstrations planned out for the uprising. At the same time, the revolutions of the Arab Spring present a challenge to this type of analysis as they show themselves to be the “rare” revolutions that do and did succeed.



Goldstone (1991), distinguishes three phases in the process of revolution: pre-revolution, revolutionary struggle and state reconstruction and stabilization of authority. He recalls Skocpol's work and other studies of revolutions and is of the opinion that ideological and cultural factors have been neglected within these theories. In his quest to set out motivating factors for state breakdown (that being ripe ground for a revolution), Goldstone has come to conclude that ideological factors increasingly promote state breakdown. He says that culture and ideology play leading roles during power struggles that follow the breakdown of the old regime. In the case of Swaziland, one could argue that what we see is how, specifically, culture (and religion) serve to reinforce the resilience of the state through the manner in which it is manipulated to yield utter obedience from citizens (to be discussed in the next chapter). Although Goldstone is much more concerned about the different ideologies that accompany or lead to revolutions, he does however lay out some interesting points about pre-revolutionary conditions or motivating factors for revolutions or, as Skocpol would have it said, factors that create a "revolutionary situation" (Goldstone, 1991).

Goldstone states the following conditions that give rise to state breakdown: state fiscal distress, elite alienation and conflict, unemployment, increased vagrancy, and associated riots and disorders among the populace. Such activity therefore gives people in a given society, a sense that something has gone wrong. The situation is further aggravated by people that actively express their complaints about specific situations; issues that impact the whole society or issues caused by the state's actions. Goldstone notes that reactions from the public often adopt/take a conservative tone and that usually the complaints are directed to the ruler of the state, whom they appeal to, to 'fix' what has gone wrong. Before the state can actually break down, weaknesses within the state attract different groups in society that rise to express their displeasures. Elites may as well go against the state in effort to push their own agendas to achieve their ends. And when the authority of the state is thoroughly weakened, things begin to take a new turn. Elites realize a new space in which there are more rivals whilst there exists new opportunities, as a result of the weakened state which loses all initiative and ability to uphold and enforce laws. Different groups that seek to alter the social and political order appear and compete to replace the old regime and assume power (Goldstone, 1991).

Goldstone's theory only speaks to a small part of the Swazi context where the uprising is concerned. According to him, state breakdown is significant. No one can attest to the possibility of the Swazi state breaking down and this immediately rules out a successful revolution in the country. But it is indeed so that the economy of the country was and still is

struggling. The weaknesses of the state were not institutional but were defined by its failure to pay civil servants on time and increase their salaries and improve their working conditions amongst other things. Of course the bigger problem was identified to be deeply embedded within the political system itself, which then affects the larger populace. Goldstone also says that different groups arise to challenge the state and express their grievances. We saw this as well in the Swazi Uprising, perhaps even leading to the actual day of the event; teachers, lawyers, students and civil servants took to the streets in calling on the state to attend to their issues and needs. What may have proven to be therefore problematic is the undefined competition from the people on the ground. Whilst they had gathered under one banner, factions developed amongst the people as they sort to identify themselves with a group that showed clear leadership. As we will see later, the situation on the ground on the day of the uprising was quite a complex one as there was no clear organization.

The following months, after the fall of the old regime, are characterized by artificial relationships and forged unity as different groups push to have their individual agendas attended to and well-accommodated. In his words, Goldstone says, “Revolutionary struggles are, for the most part, the story of how elite segments seek to appropriate and dominate one or more of these (rectification, redistribution and nationalism), while defeating similar attempts by their opponents” (Goldstone, 1991). The case of Swaziland, again, presents a different scenario where the above is concerned- simply because the Swazi regime had not been toppled.

Rod Aya (2001), states that theorists of revolution, although cognizant of the fact that theories of revolution call on human action or intervention to perpetrate the violence that characterizes revolutions, they “neglect the general theory of human agency called rational choice” because they are of the belief that macro-social facts such as revolutions are not adequately explained by such a theory. Aya is also of the same mind as Goldstone (1991), in this particular case when he states that ‘culture’ is left out in the explanation or ‘making sense of’ revolutions (Aya, 2001). Rod Aya is of the opinion that culture is very significant in explaining revolutions yet it is neglected by theorists as they assume it to be irrelevant and inadequate in explaining and theorizing macro-social facts such as that of revolutions. The “rational-choice” theory that Aya applies dates back to Thucydides, whose theory he highly favours for its sound method of explanation and truthful theory of revolution. Thucydides explains the theory as such: that people act upon their opinions (which display their cultures), by doing what they hope will succeed. Thucydides’ theory analyzes revolutions by looking

into actions and reactions, which he says are explained by “rational-choice.” To therefore say that an action is “rational” means that the participants endeavour to have their action succeed and achieve their goals. To say that it is a “choice” means that the participants consciously decide against other actions or activity in deciding to partake in that revolution. The theory of ‘rational-choice’ therefore connects the will and hope to succeed with the conscious decision to succeed (Aya, 2001). Perhaps this is an obvious theory to assume of any attempt at a revolution or successful revolution: that the people who purpose to revolutionize a country display a clear willingness and hope to change history and succeed in their endeavour.

Following the scholars that have been considered above, and in still trying to theorize revolutions, the last scholar that this dissertation will consider will be Sidney G. Tarrow, a leading scholar and expert on new social movements. In his book, “Power in Movement- Social Movements and Contentious Politics”, Tarrow says, “Social movements are collective challenges, based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities.” The key word here is evidently, “sustained.” He says that it is not a social movement unless it is sustained (Tarrow, 1998).

His main theory is laid out as such: that “contentious politics emerge in response to changes in political opportunities and constraints.” This theory states that different individuals, in their diversity, will undoubtedly have equally diverse interests which will be affected by changes that alter political opportunities and/or that create constraints. It is these alterations that eventually lead to the rise of contentious politics which is often characterized by riots, strikes, barricades etc. These actions can be sustained and become a “social movement.” Interestingly, Tarrow states that “cultural frames” within these conflicts are significant areas of conflict as they reveal the issues that are being contested over (this supports Goldstone and Aya’s position on culture- that it is significant to consider its role in revolutions). He says on page 10, “When people’s actions are based on consensual and action-oriented cultural frames, they can sustain these actions in conflict with powerful opponents.” Tarrow states that it is very difficult to control movements as the movement has no structures in place to control itself internally and all the while, externally, political constraints and opportunities continue to change and become more exclusive- which also increases the scale of conflicts and/or riots. The usual cycle in political contention is that as the movement establishes itself and grows, previously uninvolved people take interest and become a part of the movement or “social control.” When these “cycles of contention” become extreme, a revolution becomes very likely (Tarrow, 1998).

With all of the above said, what does one make of the case of Swaziland? Can we indeed consider the April 12 Uprising as a revolution or even a social movement? At least according to the above-mentioned theorists? The case of Swaziland proves to be quite complex as it also raises the question of why it did not make international news and why the situation in the country remains relatively the same and only seems to worsen.

Specifically to the case of Swaziland, Foran (2005) tends to be on point with the fact that revolutions are very rare in 3rd World countries, that even when they do occur, they are often quickly aborted due to the repressive nature of the state. And again, this is what we see with the case of Swaziland- and perhaps it explains why so little is known about the conflicts within the country and especially, in this case, the uprising that happened during a time of intense conflict in Africa (the Arab Spring) and at a time when most of the international world had their focus on Africa. As far as Foran's analysis goes, it would be as though he depicts Swaziland in the most accurate light; consider how, for instance, he states that the country seeking to revolutionize is characterized by "dependent development, repressive state, powerful political culture, crises arising from economic downturn..." Swaziland largely depends on South Africa for its development as it leans heavily on the South African currency (the Rand); (Sihlongonyane, 2003).

The Swazi state is known for its repressive nature as it has been witnessed dispersing demonstrators and blocking people from entering city centres in a bid to unite in demonstration (Times of Swaziland, April 13, 2011). The political culture of Swaziland is embedded within a complex tradition which determines who governs the country and the parameters in which the leadership of the country is determined (Sihlongonyane, 2003). The strikes and work stay-aways before the actual uprising, voiced out the crises ushered in by the economic downturn that the country was experiencing. A further interesting point that Foran (2005) makes suggests that the state seeking to revolutionize will be successful in doing so if it has solid backing from a centralized and organized force such as a post-revolutionary state which would serve to guide and protect it. It would be that for Swaziland, that state would again be South Africa. Sihlongonyane (2003) suggested that perhaps one factor that could help Swaziland realize a democracy would be significant support from its neighbouring country, South Africa. And so it would be that South Africa would represent the "centralized and organized force" to guide and protect Swaziland. It is an interesting point to think about here, perhaps one deserving its own research work; why it suits South Africa (and Mozambique, both which are Swaziland's neighbours) to have the monarchy there. Ideally,

South Africa should be leaning on Swaziland because it is undemocratic. Foran (2005) as well adopts Skocpol's definition of revolutions; that they are "rapid, basic transformations of a society's state and class structures..." This of course was not the case with the Swazi Uprising and maybe that it was why the uprising was said to be a failed revolution. The question then comes again of how one makes sense of what happened in Swaziland.

Theda Skocpol's four factors that lead to revolutions are not all fitting for the case of the April 12, 2011 Uprising, as international influence was very minimal in motivating for the uprising. A breakdown of administrative powers and that of the military was not realized in Swaziland before the movement went ahead with its plight and perhaps that may have been a significant challenge; that the movement was facing a solid state which, although faulty in many areas, was still strong and resisting of alternatives. Her "deterministic" theory is therefore not fitting in the case of Swaziland. It is very clear that what happened in Swaziland came nowhere near a revolution. The monarchy remained untouched with its institutions more firmly in place. There was no change fostered by the democratic movement and therefore no control of the state was gained.

Walt (1996) makes a mention of "the destruction of the existing state by the people of that society" which is then followed by a new political order and states this to represent a successful revolution. This "destruction" of the existing state would therefore fundamentally change institutions, shape national identities etc. Goldstone (1991) also sets out that the main pre-revolutionary condition is state breakdown. With that said, perhaps then the main problem or necessary condition/element that could have produced ripe ground for a successful revolution in Swaziland, was a powerless and broken state, which of course, does not surface as the case. The Swazi state had not reached a point in which its administrative and military powers can be weakened to the point of take-over. Factors that lead to state breakdown, such as unemployment and riots, were evidently insufficient in bringing about a complete transition of both the political and social order. In the next chapter, the social and political structures of Swaziland will be explained and some light will be shed on the complex nature of the system of governance. What needs to be understood beyond reasonable doubt is that Swaziland is not a weak country that is vulnerable to take-over.

Tarrow (1998) speaks of social movements and cycles of contention which when they become extreme, make a revolution likely. The emergence of contentious politics is therefore spiraled by "sustained" interaction between the perpetrators of the movement or revolution

and elites or opponents or authorities of the state. He makes it clear to place emphasis on “sustained”; that we cannot denote some political group ‘activity’ as a social movement unless it comprises of sustained contentious politics which are characterized by riots, strikes and barricades. With the case of Swaziland, the events and the atmosphere leading up to the uprising was characterized by strikes, demonstrations, riots, barricades etc. but when can one then call the activity in Swaziland “a social movement”? Perhaps where Tarrow’s theory falls short is in distinguishing the time frame for the “sustained” activity that characterizes contentious politics. In other words, how long is “sustained”? But besides the question of time, it is also important to note that there was no actual national movement in Swaziland, even leading to the uprising. An interviewee, Manqoba Nxumalo (2013), lamented that the problem with Swazi members of the democratic movement is that a bulk of them are mere ‘reactionaries’ and not full-time ‘activists,’ and that this level of contribution from citizens is a let-down at most times as the democratic movement struggles to be taken seriously.

Although at this stage, we cannot clearly and confidently assign a winning description of the events of April 12, 2011, in Swaziland, we are able to begin a critical engagement with some of the theories that are out there and the actual event. What can be deduced is that indeed, Rod Aya’s (2001) theory of “rational-choice” is true in all cases in that evidently, people do make the decision to be a part of a certain project and endeavour to have it succeed- perhaps that would be deemed a standard practice. How one would explain what happened in Swaziland in April 12, 2011, may depend on their experience and understanding of events. It is easy to lay it bare that there was no revolution in Swaziland, that no social movement ever existed and that only a ‘bunch of reactionaries’ took to the streets and seized a moment of global uncertainty. Yet there are critical and significant pieces of information that may pull one back from easily dismissing the case of Swaziland as such- there are perhaps factors that will help us better understand the outcry of the Swazi people and explain in satisfactory terms, what really happened and what it meant. We do however have a general idea of the causes of regime change and the factors that contribute to the success of revolutions and we know where to place (or not to place) the case of Swaziland.

With the knowledge of the factors that need to be present for a successful revolution to occur, perhaps we can assume that the absence of those same factors set by the above mentioned theorists would mean that a revolution in a given context would not come into realization. Dix (1984) says that there are very few scholars who have conducted research work on the cases of failed revolutions. He explains that a successful revolution is likely to occur when

the unfavourable regime gives rise to opposition, by also triggering “nonradical elements of society” to become “revolutionary militants.” The significant catalyst to a successful revolution for Dix is therefore the prevalence of a personalistic dictator who eventually turns the people of his country against himself and his close associates and supporters. The leadership is another important factor in a successful revolution. It is the actions of the revolutionary activists that will ultimately condition the behaviour of the regime “which thrusts key non-revolutionary actors and strata into a negative coalition.” The success of the revolutionary activists is aided by the ‘negative coalition’ which comprises of foreign governments and international actors (who have also turned against the regimes), and functioning groups that the society depends on (such as the working class in its entirety-including police forces and the army). Dix puts emphasis on the importance of the working class and its allies (trade unions); (Dix, 1984).

Dix (1984) raises important points to consider in the analyses of how and why the planned revolution in Swaziland failed. There are numerous reasons that one can start counting but important points to zoom into from Dix, are those of the leadership, a negative coalition with international support and the working class. As we will see in subsequent chapters, the working class of Swaziland is divided with a larger portion of it bearing loyalty to the royal regime. The police force and the army are headed by the king himself. The “negative coalition” that rose on the April 12 Uprising, had no international support; no foreign government nor any other international actors. The leadership is another significant element that needs sufficient understanding. What may have also destabilized the demonstrations on the day of the uprising in Swaziland, is the reality of a divided leadership or, the non-existence of a leadership that the people on the ground could clearly identify with. The next two chapters will provide clearer understanding on the manner in which events played out in the uprising and ultimately, provide a basis of understanding of why the attempt at a revolution did not fall through in Swaziland.

At this point, perhaps it would be ideal to consider practical examples of cases that may shed light onto how revolutions work and in contrasting these cases to that of Swaziland, the examples will assist further in analyzing and making sense of what was dubbed as the “Swazi April 12 Uprising” of 2011.

## **The Arab Spring**

Three countries from the Arab Spring (Egypt, Libya and Tunisia) will be considered as examples of successful revolutions (in which governments were toppled) and as stated earlier, the leadership of the Swazi Uprising claimed to have the events from these countries, as one of their motivations to initiate their uprising, and so it proves quite significant to consider the Arab Spring as it also happened in 2011- the same year as the Swazi Uprising.

The “Arab Spring” refers to a series of protests that sprang across North Africa and the Middle East, which commenced in 2010. The “Arab Spring” is also referred to as the “Arab Awakening”, “Arab Spring and Winter” or “Arab Uprisings.” The protests were initially sparked off by protests that erupted in Tunisia, Sidi Bouzid, following a said Mohamed Bouazizi’s self-immolation after he was unjustly treated by the police. This incident revealed their (the police/government) corruption and ill-treatment of citizens. Other Arab countries were struck, such as Egypt, Yemen, Jordan and Algeria and with that, protests spread to other countries. Governments have since been overthrown in Tunisia (on 14 January 2011, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali fled to Saudi Arabia), Egypt (twice; on 11 February 2011, President Hosni Mubarak resigned and ended his 30-year presidency and on 3 July 2013, the ‘new’ government was overthrown by the military and removed President Morsi from power), Libya (on 23 August 2011, Muammar Gaddafi was overthrown and on 20 October 2011, he was murdered in Sirte, his hometown) and Yemen (President Ali Abdullah Saleh was replaced by deputy, President Abd Rabbuh Mansur al-Hadi on 27 February 2012); (Albanyadmin, 2012 ).

To begin with, we will consider the Tunisian revolution. A series of violent demonstrations carried out on the streets of Tunisia were sparked by Mohammed Bouazizi’s self-immolation. Protests ran through December 2010 and ultimately resulted in the ousting of the long standing President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, early in January 2011, on the 14th. Motivating factors for the demonstrations included issues of high rates of unemployment, corruption, poor living conditions, food inflation, lack of freedom of speech and numerous other forms of political freedom. Tunisia had not experienced such intense political unrest in nearly three decades. The conflicts resulted in an innumerable number of deaths and injuries; a bulk of them as a result of the police and security action against demonstrators. The then President Abidine Ben Ali ended his 23 years of holding power- he fled into exile, in Saudi Arabia. Following the departure of Ben Ali, a state of emergency was declared in Tunisia. A



caretaker coalition government was thereafter established and it encompassed members of the Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD), Ali's party, and as well figures belonging to the opposition and other ministries. In no time, at least 5 of the newly appointed ministers that did not belong to the RCD party, resigned. All the while, protests had not ceased and on the 27th of January, the Prime Minister, Mohamed Ghannouchi, was pressured into reshuffling government. His reshuffling of government included a complete exclusion of all RCD members (although he remained), and subsequently, the 6th of February saw the suspension of the former ruling party, which was later dissolved in the following month, on the 9th of March. Due to continued daily protests which did not lose momentum, Ghannouchi resolved to resigning on the 27th of February. The next prime minister was Beji Caid el Sebsi. The first post-revolution election was held on the 23rd of October. Representatives were to be selected into a 217-member constituent assembly which would take responsibility over the new constitution. Ennahda, the leading Islamist party, won 37% of the votes and this resulted in the election of 42 women to occupy the 217-member constituent assembly (Albanyadmin, 2012; Anderson, 2011).

Prior to any Egyptian political unrest, Mohammed Elbaradei (a presidential candidate who later became a central figure in Egyptian politics), predicted that a similar explosion of protests would erupt in Egypt. And indeed, inspired by the uprising in Tunisia, protests in Egypt began on the 25th of January 2011. Some of the motivating factors for the revolution included the high scale of corruption within the authoritarian regime, economic breakdown and also, protestors were demanding free elections that were not manipulated. On the 28th of January, the Egyptian government strategically disrupted internet access at around midnight of that day, in effort to interrupt communicating channels that enabled protestors to organize, communicate and share information on cyber space. On that very day, later on as the protestors thrived on the streets, the then president Hosni Mubarak appointed a new cabinet, following the dismissal of his government, and for the first time in almost 30years, Mubarak appointed the first Vice President- Omar Suleiman. On the 10th of February, Mubarak gave up his power to Suleiman but soon announced that he would continue on as president of the country, up to the end of his term. Protestors did not relent, they intensified and pressured for alternatives in the current state of affairs. Suleiman immediately announced that presidential powers had been transferred to the military of Egypt and that Mubarak had resigned (Abaza, 2011; Albanyadmin, 2012).

The military acted quickly and had the Egyptian Parliament dissolved and the constitution of Egypt suspended, with promises of lifting Egypt's "thirty-year emergency laws." On the 4th of March, the greater number of Egyptians approved Essam Sharaf's (a civilian) appointment as the Prime Minister of Egypt, in Tahrir Square. However, these alterations within the Egyptian government did not hush the violent protests which continued well through 2011. Many Egyptians still had grievances; they were still dissatisfied with the military's "sluggish" attention it paid to how it operated power and attending to reforms. Hosni Mubarak and Habib al-Adli (who was a minister) were however sentenced to life imprisonment for failing to prevent the initial killings of the first six days of the Egyptian revolution. Egypt's first democratically elected president, Mohamed Morsi, was sworn in. on the 22nd of November 2012, new protests erupted and on the 3rd of July 2013, Morsi was removed from power as the military overthrew the existing government (Abaza, 2011; Albanyadmin, 2012).

Protests against the government began on the 15th of February in Libya and in just about only 3 days, the opposition had achieved control over most of Benghazi- the second largest city in Libya. The government failed in its attempt to recapture Benghazi. Protests had spread well into the capital- Tripoli- following which was a television address by Saif-al-Islam Gaddafi, which cautioned and warned protestors about the near possibilities of civil war. The rising death toll alarmed the international community and drew attention to Libya. As a result of all the attention and condemnation, numerous Libyan leaders resigned from the offices and as well the government was being pressured to dismantle. Protests continued as there were clashes between the demonstrators and government forces which were actively engaged in controlling parts of the country. The United Nations Security Council Resolution of 1973 was adopted on the 17th of March, "authorizing a no-fly zone over Libya, and all necessary measures to protect civilians," (Anderson, 2011; Spencer, 2011).

A couple of days later, the United States, France and the United Kingdom intervened with a bombing campaign that was against Gaddafi forces and his supporters. More countries joined in and also intervened in Libya; a coalition of 27 states from Europe and the Middle East. Violent conflict and fighting continued in Libya as demonstrators and rebels fought each other in capturing towns and seizing control of them. The west side of the country experienced far worse fighting which lasted for over 3 months. The end of Gaddafi's government and his 42 years of power came to an end when, in late August, anti Gaddafi fighters captured Tripoli. Before his capture and ultimate end, Gaddafi had declared Sirte as Libya's new capital as he had regrouped and settled there with a number of his top

government officials, with which he had set up institutions of government with. Other officials had simply fled to other parts of Libya such as Sabha, Bani Walid, and to as well, outside and surrounding countries. However, areas into which some of Gaddafi's officials had fled to, fell and got captured. In late September, Sabha fell and Bani Walid was captured following a "grueling siege". On the 20th of October, fighters supported by the National Transitional Council, captured Sirte and in the process, killed Gaddafi (Anderson, 2011; Spencer, 2011).

Numerous similar factors are seen to have motivated the events of the Arab Spring and these broadly include extreme poverty, economic decline, unemployment, human rights violations, political corruption, citizen's dissatisfaction with the concentration of wealth in the hands of an autocratic leadership retaining power for decades and as well with the lack of transparency with the redistribution of the wealth. Overall, the revolutions of the Arab Spring have shown an overall dissatisfaction with the rule of governments that are dictatorships in their nature and function. Where leadership is concerned, the labour movement in rural Tunisia rose in full arms and charged the demonstrations. Egypt's revolution was largely spear-headed by young and urban people which were based in major cities; they planned the uprisings. In Libya, protests were ignited by armed rebel groups from the eastern provinces- it revealed the regional and tribal divisions that troubled the country for decades (Albanyadmin, 2012; Lynch, 2011).

So what does one make of the case of Swaziland with everything considered? One of the interviewees of this dissertation suggested that one of the main failures of the Swazi Uprising was that there was no clear leadership- due to the nature of how the revolution itself came into being. It is true and clear that the same factors that are similar between the three African countries (Tunisia, Egypt and Libya), to have motivated their revolutions, qualify for Swaziland as well, as they also characterize the issues that the people of Swaziland were, and even so today, are faced with. Progressives in Swaziland state that Swaziland still struggles with an autocratic regime that is corrupt and unjust to the people of Swaziland. The revolutions of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya were fuelled by the grievances that people had with the state of affairs in their countries. Internal and external factors and pressures weakened the states, making it possible for protestors to topple the government. Perhaps evidently, Aya's (2001) "rational-choice" can be applied with the countries of the Arab Spring; protestors clearly displayed the will to end injustice and aimed to succeed in their endeavour to do so. Interestingly, Theda Skocpol's (1979) definition of what a revolution is brings up a

significant question in this case. She says that revolutions should be “rapid” The Tunisian revolution took about twenty-eight days, the Egyptian revolution took about eighteen days and the Libyan revolution took about eight months and a week.

So the question here comes with regards to what Skocpol says; that how ‘long’ is “rapid”? This teases out the theories that theorists assign in defining such incidents, because as they assist in defining key elements in our societies, they lack in their definition and analysis. This is also the reason why one single theory is insufficient to stand alone as the main ‘formula’ that explains why and when revolutions occur. And with that said, there is still the question concerning the case of Swaziland; whether or not it was a revolution that happened on April 12, 2011, if indeed it was an authentic and exclusive creation by any existing leadership or if it was taking advantage of the period of global uncertainty.

A review of the Southern African democratic movements of the 1990s will be briefly considered here and be compared to the unchanging authoritarian regime of Swaziland.

### **Southern African Democratic Movements of the 1990s**

The 1970s, 1980s and the 1990s, were both challenging and transitional years for sub-Saharan African countries. In other regions such as in Asia, underdeveloped countries were steadily rising and achieving economic growth whilst in Africa, the opposite was happening. Most African countries were under dictatorships and civil wars characterized the scenes of others. Further, the continent was in a dark cloud with the explosion and spread of the HIV/AIDS epidemic which accounted for many deaths and brought down life expectancy. The continent seemed to have no good coming from it and little hope was perceived by outsiders. A radical change did however occur across the continent as the 1990s saw an economic growth as more than half of sub-Saharan Africa transitioned into new democracies. Most of the African countries held multiparty elections for the first time since they had gained their independence in the 1960s. This transition brought new freedoms that the continent had never experienced before and it seemed that the cloud hanging above the continent had been removed (Miguel, 2011).

What was commonly seen with the beginning of the 1990s in sub-Saharan Africa were different groups from a given society, making demands to put an end to that particular autocratic regime and its injustices. Demonstrations involved civil servants, trade unions,

teachers, churches, lawyers, students and academics. What was most significant to note in this transitional moment, was that people came out with clear and concise political demands- they had set goals and explicitly called for them. International donors also played a part in motivating for civil engagement in opposing the political views of regimes in the transition period as most of the African countries were experiencing economic crises. Influence and pressure came from the international community which came with offers of financial assistance. The West believed that it reflected liberal democracy following the end of the cold war and with that, in the 1990s, brought Official Development Assistance (ODA). Democracy and human rights were promoted and the international donors began to also put their hand in with the reintroduction of democratic institutions that would allow for easy access to the government in order for the people to communicate their grievances easily (Rakner and Skage, retrieved 03 August 2014- year of conference not provided).

The third wave of democratization in Africa happened at an interesting time, a time that also signaled a global period of liberal democracy. In 1989 was the fall of the Berlin Wall and with that, liberal democracy came to be the dominant ideology and then with the 1990s, came democratic ideals that were motivated by different groups in many societies. The rise of pro-democracy movements was important and its determination proved to be equally significant in realizing multi-party systems on the African continent. Some of the movements of the 1990s achieved victory and ended autocratic regimes whilst others achieved democracies that were short-lived. Ultimately, what they all had in common was that different groups that represented different and specific interest in a given society, all came together in agreement to motivate for a change in the then governing political systems and with the purpose to replace them with multi-party democracies (Rakner and Skage, retrieved 03 August 2014- year of conference not provided).

With democracy, the African continent experienced a space which allowed free press, multiple opposition parties and civic organizations which were all separate and free from the state. Most of the democratic transitions on the continent were experienced between the years of 1990 and 1994. It is perhaps important to zoom into the main causes of democratization. Nicolas Van de Walle (2001) states that we should understand the complexity of democratization as the process involves numerous factors that impact on the institutions and economy of a given country. Admittedly, each revolution and democratic breakthrough is different from the other. Jennings (2012) states that the democratic breakthroughs in Africa shared “common domestic and international influences” which included the presence of

opposition, economic crises, mass mobilization, very poor service delivery, the growth and influence of civic society, rising expectations often induced by a literate and educated group, demands to access information and offers of regime reforms by outside actors that side with the opposition. To use the South African example, the apartheid regime was pressured by external factors such as democratic socialization, diplomatic and economic pressure and direct democracy assistance (Jennings, 2012).

Larry Diamond (2000) places emphasis on the role of civil society as significant in realizing a democratic dispensation. He motivates for the need of a strong, autonomous, vibrant and resourceful civil society that is able to unite in a broad front and be further able to carry out significant roles that aid democratic development. The role of civil society is vast and important as it not only challenges but limits state power and therefore also limits abuses of authority, it serves to tighten the belt on the rule of law and keeps a closer watch on human rights, it oversees the democratic process and pays particular attention to elections to ensure a free and fair democratic process and experience. The civil society goes further into conscientizing citizens of their rights and roles in society, encouraging for engagement between civic organisations and establishing a culture of tolerance and acceptance, making efforts to have marginalised groups represented in the political process and motivating that they too engage in societal discourses that impact their lives. More and above, civil society tries to offer institutions that can see to the development of communities outside of the state and also functions to create easy access to information in as much as it is adamant about economic and political reforms (Diamond, 2000).

The military in most of the African countries has proven to be a threat to democratic transitions. Diamond (2000) suggests that civilians (and their concerns) should be held in much higher regard to military privileges as so often, the military has been seen to be “committed to a truly national mission” and that when they intervene in political discourses, they often protect the interests of the autocratic regime; “African militaries do not exist—and certainly do not function—to defend against external threats. They are there to hold the state together, and increasingly not even to do that, but rather to prey on its citizens whenever the opportunity presents itself.” Diamond identifies the main problem of the military to be the power that it has and states that most of Africa’s democracies began with a disgust and rejection of military rule whereas with democratic malfunctions, the military finds opportunity to step in to ‘rescue’ the situation. The military finds more opportunity to take control when civil society shows weakness and when the leadership of the regime breaks up

into factions and create chaos. The suggestion is that the institutions of the military must be developed accordingly, the needs of the military to be met and its salaries paid. This, according to Diamond, will avoid a situation in which the military takes to challenge civilian dominion (Diamond, 2000).

Lastly, relevant institutions need to be available within the state itself, within civil society and in the political dispensation which will accommodate and drive participation of citizens in ways that will contribute to the accountability of government. Political parties should be associated to and must have links with civil society but should make sure not to get lost within civil society nor have civil society get lost within them (Diamond, 2000).

The review of sub-Saharan Africa's democracies provides interesting thoughts on the responses to why and how Swaziland has maintained its authoritarian rule. Firstly, the literature points to the importance of civil society and its role in society. In comparison to the Swazi civil society, can one honestly say that the country's civil society was or is a vibrant and autonomous group that had/has the potential to break new ground? This dissertation is of the opinion that it is not- the following chapters will make this point clear. Numerous groups that represented different interests did indeed gather to voice out concerns but the call for democracy did not emanate from everyone's lips for varying reasons. The voices of the different groups were not heard to be united in a call for democracy or a revolution. As we will also discover, there has not been significant international attention on Swaziland. The country was denied loans by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and by its neighbouring country, South Africa, and so it has not had pressure from donors to reform either. An interesting one is the mentioning of the military. The case of Swaziland presents a case in which the military is loyal to the king and the royal family, no questions asked. The next chapter will reveal more clearly the structure of the Swazi political system which sets out the roles of all features of the Swazi state and therefore bring forth the understanding of the reality of the status quo.

We have not yet reached a conclusive answer to the question of why some revolutions succeed and others do not and nor have we come clear of what essentially makes for a successful revolution. Perhaps one can say that circumstances, context and opportunities account for what may become a successful revolution. The problems and grievances of the people of the Arab Spring are not different and foreign to the struggle of the Swazi people. Taking into account that the Swazi people possessed sufficient motivation to push hard for a

revolution and not succeeding in their attempt at one, does call for a deeper assessment of the political system itself. That perhaps the political system of a given country may be significant in assessing and understanding the character and activities of the people that belong in that particular country. The following chapter will look into the political system of Swaziland and the structure of the Swazi government and how it maintains its control. This will help us to better understand the struggle of the democratic movement in the country, and the challenges that it faces with the government of Swaziland. More so, it will be important to tap into the cultural aspects that Foran (2005) and Goldstone (1991) state to be significant in promoting state breakdown.



## CHAPTER 3

### A POLITICAL HISTORY OF SWAZILAND

This chapter will consider a brief history of the emergence of the country that is now Swaziland. The aim of this chapter is to provide a deeper understanding of the institutions that keep the Swazi monarchy firmly in place. This chapter is to clearly display the nature and character of the small kingdom- it is this very character of the country that will be further probed into as alternatives for the Swazi political system of governance are considered, in the closing chapters of this dissertation. The country's relationship with apartheid South Africa is important to inspect in this regard. Significantly, we will look into how the Swazi government is structured and how it operates through institutions such as the *Tinkhundla* system (the parliamentary electoral system of Swaziland) and *Tibiyo takaNgwane* (a supposed trust fund for the nation controlled by the monarchy), which constitute the power of the monarchy and its control. Factors that contribute to the sustenance of the monarchy such as the roles of culture/tradition and religion will be considered. This chapter should help us to better understand, as well, the political economy of Swaziland and recognize that Swaziland is not a mere small and weak country that is vulnerable to forces intending to topple it.

This chapter is organized into eight sections that each consider the points mentioned above. I raise a couple of significant arguments: firstly, we cannot easily suggest South African intervention in the Swazi predicament as past relations between the two countries may potentially define current relations differently. In the 1960s Swaziland revealed itself to be untrustworthy and opportunistic towards the current ruling party. Secondly, the construction of the *tinkhundla* system happened over time as with the strategies used to firmly establish it in the Swazi society and therefore web everyone and everything in it. Challenge to the Swazi political system has to then be met with the same (if not more) level of strategy planning and commitment- the royal elite will not easily let go of their power; the control of power is central to the *tinkhundla* system. Thirdly, tradition is very important in the Swazi system and it is used as a disguise to further elite and royal agendas. Both religion and tradition are manipulated by the king in serving the interests of the monarchy. These are some of the important arguments that come up in this chapter.

## **Emergence of the Swazi state**

The early nineteenth century saw the establishment of the Swazi state through the initiative of the *Mfecane* (widespread warfare between Southern African indigenous ethnic groups between the years 1815 and about 1840) which facilitated processes to form the region of the Swazis. Although the nineteenth century Swazi state was dominated by aristocrats and chiefs whose production and material base relied heavily on their control over land, cattle and labour, the Mfecane, by 1860, had developed “a tributary mode of production” with the dominant class. The Swazi state deliberately allied itself closely with the dominant class as a strategy to defend itself from its then opponent, the Zulu state. Between 1864 and 1876 were numerous clashes between the Swazi soldiers and Transvaal Boers; campaigning against indigenous groups. The ruling class of the Swazi further allowed for the invasion of Swazi capital when gold deposits were discovered in the Swazi state in the 1860s. The discovery of gold deposits in the region attracted prospectors, adventurers, hunters and fortune-seekers, which came with offers to pay for the rights to trade and access the resources of the Swazi state. The accommodation willed by the Swazi state resulted in a complete penetration of the minerals and resources found in the region and resulted in the assets of the country being sold (Daniel and Vilane, 1986).

The British colonized Swaziland after the defeat of the Transvaal in the South African War of 1899-1902. The British colonisers came with their own policy to develop settler agriculture. Its colonial policy demanded large-scale appropriation of land which in turn meant that the Swazi people would be stripped off of their claim and their right to two thirds of their land. The expropriation of land presented a huge problem for the ruling class of the Swazi state as it meant that their centre of power was threatened. The British did, however, take caution not to be extreme in their policies and took to consider maintaining some existing methods of production in the areas that were restricted for the Swazis to occupy. This in effect served to reduce the cost of labour as it made it possible for the migrant proletariat to access the said ‘native areas’ for means of reproduction. The royalty class of the Swazi seemed to manage to adjust to the new conditions and soon began to serve as a mediator, facilitating a steady supply of labour to South Africa. With this form of recruiting labour, taxation charges were imposed with the accumulation of capital. The colonial power lured on the monarchy to impose and stipulate numerous concessions upon the Swazi working class and peasantry. The British had the monarchy function as the face of their leadership. With time, the Swazi royalist class emerged as the Swazi aristocracy with evident intermediary characteristics- the

bourgeois class of the Swazis which existed within and under the capitalist British colony (Daniel and Vilane, 1986).

### **Swaziland's Relationship with South Africa**

The Swazi aristocracy continued with its comprador character well into the decolonization period, its relationship with capital made clear with its relationship with apartheid South Africa. The prospect of attaining independence led the royal Swazi class to establish their own party, The Imbokodvo National Movement (INM), in effort to retain and perpetuate the monarchy, mineral and land rights, Swazi customs, and the privileges exclusive to King, referred to by the Swazis as *Ngwenyama*. The INM, also dubbed as “the King’s party”, was also established to meet the requirements set by the Westminster electoral process which called for a party representative of the interests of the Swazi royalist class, which included chiefs. King Sobhuza II (the current King’s father) was the main spokesperson of the INM party as he was its’ leader. Support for the INM also came from the apartheid South African government, foreign capital and the local settler bourgeoisie. The creation of the INM was anchored financially and structurally by important and well-known politicians of the apartheid government such as the Broederbonders Van Wyk de Vries and B.J. Vorster (Daniel and Vilane, 1986).

With the launch of his political movement, it seemed evident to all that King Sobhuza II received massive support from the South African Government. As a way of covering up the evidence, he spoke publicly against having accepted substantial money from the apartheid South African Governments to fund election expenses. He spoke against claims that suggested that he had agreed to sell the Kingdom to the Pretoria regime and other claims that he had compromised some areas of southern Swaziland for parts of the eastern Transvaal. The initial suggestion of border adjustments by Hendrik Verwoerd (of the South African Government) in 1959, made it all the more evident that Sobhuza may indeed have been engaging with the Pretoria regime (Davies, O’Meara & Dlamini, 1985; Macmillan, 1986).

Leaders of the INM were careful not to do anything that would upset relations with South Africa; although they empathized with the plight of the African National Congress (ANC) and played a part in their struggle, they still treaded carefully to secure what they deemed to be ‘interests of Swaziland’. The mid-1960s saw a common interest between South Africa and

Swaziland- that of “natural native democracy” (Macmillan, 1986). Relations between the two countries continued even after Swaziland received its independence and well into the 80s. Having allowed the presence of ANC members in the country (as per the 1977 negotiations with the then ANC president, President Tambo), in 1984, the government of Swaziland completely turned its back on the ANC with the issuing of an expulsion order against them. With that done, the Swazi government went on to confirm agreements on trade; to engage in deals and do business with South Africa. The progress of events motivated Swaziland to make efforts to review and change their foreign policy in order to be able to stabilize their hold to power in areas in which it had been shaken due to the independence of countries such as Angola and Mozambique and the gaining momentum of the Zimbabwean liberation struggle. Furthermore, in the 1970s, Swaziland also began to channel its foreign policies to be in accordance to those of the OAU and other influential states (Daniel and Vilane, 1986).

Following the realization that the eastern fronts of Swaziland and Mozambique were infiltrated by the ANC in 1979, the South African Government set in motion their “destabilization strategy” which came with its military and economic coercion as a threat to the Swazi government yet also offering to transfer the legal power they held on the said ‘Swazi land’ that had been long claimed by the Swazi monarchy as their own. The strategy used by the South African government compelled the Swazi government to sign an agreement with Pretoria which would force them to turn their backs on the ANC and no longer support nor empathize with their plight. The Swazi government signed and agreed to the terms; Sobhuza believed that Swazi lands would be restored along with its resources and that Swaziland would finally regain its political independence. Of course, all the while, the South African government was aware of Sobhuza’s ambitions and played on them (Daniel and Vilane, 1986).

Six months before he passed away, in February 1982, Sobhuza agreed to sign the security pact with South Africa and at the time, this pact was kept secret. The Swazi government began to focus their energies on strategies to remove the presence of the leadership of the ANC from Swaziland. Following the death of Sobhuza later in 1982, the Swazi government accelerated their pace in eliminating the ANC from Swaziland; tens of members were deported to neighbouring Mozambique and with the signing of the Nkomati accord (a non-aggression pact between the People’s Republic of Mozambique and apartheid South Africa) in March 1984, Swaziland could do whatever it deemed effective to rid themselves of ANC bandits- hundreds more ANC members were deported. This accord made bare the

collaboration between Swaziland and apartheid South Africa. In 1985, Swaziland allied itself much more closely to South Africa and went as far as motivating the policies adopted by South Africa (Daniel and Vilane, 1986).

Notably, it was the 'land deal' between the Swazi government and Pretoria that motivated for clashes between Swaziland and the ANC members and to the detriment of the Swazi government, as it was set on securing the 'land deal', the South African government later changed tactic and made it known that they were to sort land issues with "the relevant Bantustan leaders". This of course seemed improbable and hard to believe of a class that was unwilling to lose any power, and specifically over territory. The South African government went back on numerous deals it had with Swaziland, leaving the authorities with desperate calls for help and to end public talk of things going wrong in the country. Not only did Swaziland lose out on the 'land deal' and agreements on trade missions, it also experienced the immediate liquidation of some of its significant companies (Daniel and Vilane, 1986).

### **Leading to Independence**

Swaziland gained its independence in September, 1968. The road leading to the independence of Swaziland can be traced back to the end of World War II, when events made it clear that the racial policies of apartheid South Africa would prohibit Swaziland from becoming a part of the Union. The National Party obtained victory in the Union in 1948 and with that, the British colonial power put plans into action of transferring power to a local party representative of the interests of the Swazi people. The implementation of measures to hand over power to a Swazi leadership were in full swing in the 1960s; in the years of 1962 and 1963, action was taken towards establishing an interim Legislative Council and a constitution which would have to be completed and approved before the country could be granted with their independence. The interim Legislative Council would be made of members picked from both the Swazi National Council and the European Advisory Council. The 1960s were therefore characterized by clashes between numerous classes and interest groups that had come into being as the state of the country was evolving; major groups that were prominent were these: the Swazi "petite bourgeoisie" or lower middle class, the monarchy and the European settlers (Booth, 1983; Macmillan, 1986).

Sobhuza and his predecessor (Gwamile) had both played significant roles in the strengthening and positioning of the monarchy within the traditional society of Swaziland. With impeccable precision and diligence, they both had managed to define a royal establishment which would rise and position itself as a power that could assume authority and rule- this being something that the colonialists had not anticipated nor desired for the Swazi state. This royal organization did not however ascertain the establishment of a monarchy leading to independence. A bulk of land was still in the hands of white settlers and almost all of the arable land was in their ownership; it was evident that they wanted to maintain their dominance even after Swaziland had been granted its independence. The rising Swazi middle class became more determined to establish itself and forward its own agenda as it was a product of the educational system and as well stood outside of the royal click. The Swazi monarchy had however become a formidable force; Gwamile and Sobhuza had done justice to its growing influence as they stood up against the colonial power with utter boldness and firmness of purpose (Booth, 1983).

In the 1960s, Sobhuza had become a popular and prominent figure within Swazi politics- annual rituals such as the *incwala* (the main ritual of Kingship – for if there is no king, there is no *incwala*, also known as the first fruits ceremony) ceremony served to enhance his influence and “reinforce the legitimacy of the monarchy”. The might of the royal class was particularly heightened by its control of Swazi Nation Land, whose bulk comprised of what had been Native Land and had been bought back through the Lifa Fund and held by the king “in trust for the nation”; as the traditional explanation goes. The distribution of this land to the people was in “usufruct”, which meant that in return for enjoying the ‘right’ of using what essentially was ‘borrowed land’, the people had to be loyal to the King. Although the King placed significant emphasis on tradition, his power was limited by his inaccessibility of the mineral wealth which was still in the hands of the colony and its beneficiaries (Booth, 1983).

European settlers had considerable power in their hands and their power was increased after World War II, with the inflow of capital for development which they used to further develop the arable land that was in their hands. The Swazi economy had also been boosted by a rapid growth in a number of industries such as that of sugar, citrus, asbestos, woodpulp, pineapple, timber, and iron ore and a major source of cash income was the replacement of labour migration by local employment and commuting. In those years, Swaziland had also begun to import labour from neighbouring countries such as Mozambique and South Africa (Macmillan, 1986). The twentieth century was also largely characterized by a conflict of

interest between European settlers who wanted to maintain their control over land and the monarchy which had planned to have the land returned to Swazis. In the years following the world war, the Swazi lower middle class established itself as a formidable force that had come out of an education system sponsored by the government. This petite Swazi bourgeoisie comprised of teachers, clerks, minor civil servants with up-coming artisans, traders and small holders. Gradually, the Swazi petite bourgeoisie class grew in realizing and discovering its own interests as being separate from the settlers and the traditional/royal elite. Their interests lay in improving their stance in society and were specifically concerned with wage issues within the modernizing, post war Swazi society. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Swazi petite bourgeoisie grew to be viewed as a threat by both the European settlers and the traditional elite as political parties claimed to be representing the working class in the various demands that they made (Booth, 1983).

The three different groups were all concerned and preoccupied with securing their interests with the approaching transfer of power. Conferences were held in London in 1962 and 1963, bringing together all interests groups to deliberate over problem areas such as the existence of a king and the power that would be constitutionally assigned to him, the control of the minerals of the country and the election of the members of the Legislative Council. The failure of both conferences led the British colony to put forward a proposal of its own constitution in 1963 which gave more power to the “queen’s commissioner”. This increased power extended over the mineral rights and revenues that the king had wanted for the Swazi nation. The commissioner also made sure to hold power over the appointing of the members of the Legislative Council to make sure that neither of the king or the settlers could dominate it. Essentially, under the 1964 constitution placed by the British, the European settlers and the king were sure to lose to the colonial power and having realized this, they formed an alliance against the British. In June 1964, elections to the Legislative Council were held; political parties changed tact in the election campaign with the reality of the looming independence. Overall, three parties emerged to represent differing interest groups: the monarchy (represented by the newly formed INM which was mainly interested in the reproduction of the monarchy through tradition), the European settlers (which formed the United Swaziland Association- USA- and were mainly interested in preserving and protecting their property rights from any interference from an independent government) and the Swazi petite bourgeoisie (represented by the NNLC – Ngwane National Liberatory Congress - party which

motivated for labour gains through union gathering and advocated that mineral and land rights be in the control of a representative government), (Booth, 1983).

In a plebiscite held in early 1964, the king intended to prevent the elections by demonstrating significant opposition to the British constitution; only 154 of a population of about 122 000 Swazis voted for the constitution and yet the British continued with their plans to impose and implement the constitution that they had produced. The numbers motivated the king and the Swazi National Council (called the Likoqo which is the king's advisory council, made up of members of the royal family and selected chiefs) to quickly establish a party representative of the royal elite and that marked the becoming of the INM which was to contest power (Booth, 1983; Macmillan, 1986; Magongo, 2009). Making reference to Sobhuza's dealings with apartheid South Africa, Sir Brian Marwick made the comment that the INM had perhaps received "different advice from sources which have other interests than those of the Swazi's at heart." With that, he further stated that the king's identification with the INM would divide the Swazi's into two opposing groups with different political interests (Macmillan, 1986). The election results declared the INM victorious with 85 percent of the vote, the NNLC achieved 12 percent of the vote. Other parties achieved close to nothing in votes and complained that they were refused by the chiefs from campaigning in the areas that they presided over. The INM had evidently enjoyed the facilities provided for by the well-funded Swazi National Council (Macmillan, 1986). The king repeatedly made clear his aims of protecting property rights and the USA supported his strengthening claim over power and the minerals and resources of the country which he kept "in trust for the nation". About six seats in the INM were occupied by the USA as relations between the monarchy and the settlers had strengthened. An analyst quoted by Booth (1983) stated that, "The creation of the INM dramatically altered the political situation in Swaziland; it gave the traditionalists a vehicle by which they could challenge the political parties on their own terms but with the power and prestige of the monarchy solidly behind them."

With the victory of the king's party, Sobhuza could now make all desired amendments to the constitution but temporarily faced hostility from Sir Brian Marwick, the queen's commissioner. Marwick was soon replaced by Sir Francis Loyd who was more supportive of Sobhuza's aims to centralize all power to himself and as well control the minerals and resources of the country. In 1965, the administration led by Loyd permitted the INM to draw up their own independent constitution which would replace the 1964 colonial one. The panel only comprised of the INM and USA members- the NNLC was excluded from the panel and



this on its own was a victory for the alliance that the king had formed with the settlers. The new constitution divorced itself from the Westminster-style constitutional monarch which had afforded the king very minimal power; the new constitution allowed the king to nominate a fifth of the thirty-member Assembly (the remaining twenty-four were to be elected from constituencies in which the king's power was centralized), half of the twelve-member Senate, the upper house of Parliament which held the power to veto legislation, appoint the chief justice and the prime minister (Booth, 1983).

The years between 1964 and 1967 witnessed the weakening of the alliance between the king and the USA as the king's claim to power solidified. Disagreements had ensued between the partners over voter's rolls under the newly developed constitution. Eventually the INM won a single national roll and concluded the king's quest to assume total political power. By the year 1966, the king had achieved this victory and in February 1967 the new constitution was promulgated and formed the basis of the independence constitution for the following month of April in 1968. The results of those elections confirmed the INM's claim to power with 75 percent of the vote and also indicated future contestation of power as the NNLC won 47 percent of the vote in the Mpumalanga constituency but to their disappointment, won no seats in parliament and remained an opposition party, voiceless from the exclusion from parliament. Sobhuza II was officially installed as a king under the new constitution on 25 April 1967 and on September 1968, the instruments of government were officially in his control- that marking the day of the independence of Swaziland (Booth, 1983; Magongo, 2009).

### **-After Independence**

In 1968, Swaziland gained its independence as a constitutional monarch. The king was constitutionally placed as head of state and lead with a cabinet that was selected from the INM- the ruling party. The constitution afforded the king considerable power but as most would soon witness, Sobhuza exercised extensive political power within the boundaries of the monarchy (Davies, O'Meara & Dlamini, 1985). At this time, Sobhuza had become increasingly popular as kings in other parts of Africa were losing political power and not gaining it as he was. He had achieved his power through facing the colonizer and European settlers head-on and outsmarting their agendas. Having assumed total power, Sobhuza also managed to hush the activity and voices of Swazi opposition parties. Although the traditional

elite had achieved total power and had seemingly stifled the voices of all opposition, their initial years of dominion were not as smooth as many had perhaps hoped. The first five years were essentially a time of facing new realities for the monarchy and the opposition; settling in and adjusting to the different atmosphere that the country has entered into with the coming of independence. This of course may be said to be typical of African countries transitioning from any political system or leadership (Booth, 1983).

As it were, the final constitution allowed the king to nominate the whole committee and in the time following independence this proved to be problematic as the Swaziland Development Fund, the *Tibiyo takaNgwane*, was funded by revenue from the country's resources and minerals which in turn served to finance the lives and interests of the traditional elite and the royal family. Through the fund, land was purchased, investments were made, projects were financed and will of this, the accounts of the fund were not made public for the Swazi citizen to assess and have a say over the use of the funds. (Macmillan, 1986). Simelane argues that the Swazi economy is firmly in the hands of the monarchical state due to the amount of shares it has in various companies throughout the country, some of which the state was involved in attracting into the country. The fund therefore holds shares in numerous such as that of property, agriculture, transport, manufacturing, commerce, finance and tourism (Simelane, 2007).

Another issue that the Swazi National Council was preoccupied with in the early years of independence was the issue of citizenship. The South African Sharpeville massacre of 1960 resulted in a huge flow of South Africans into Swaziland, some seeking exile. Most sought and found employment within the Swazi industries. Some members of the Council began to make some noise against "foreign workers", especially after the 1963 labour unrest. The British had allowed any African that had stayed for a number of years in Swaziland, to acquire citizenship status. The Council had it placed into the constitution that a mere birth into the country did not warrant one citizen status and that what would determine one as a citizen would be through a process referred to as *kukhonta* ("allegiance to a chief" who presided over a constituency). This level of control afforded the council a solid economic and political weapon as well with the access to the *Tibiyl takaNgwane* Fund (MacMillan, 1986).

The early years of independence were characterized by sturdy activity which aimed at stifling trade union organization and the efforts of opposition parties. The monarchy put measures to prohibit the growth and activity of working class organizations. After 1973, meetings of more

than ten people were not allowed in Swaziland and with this response from the government, a clear political response had been communicated to the people. In the 1972 elections, the NNLC grew and won elections in three constituencies, giving them a victory of three of the twenty-four seats in parliament- this growth was evidently due to the dissatisfaction of the working class as those constituencies and a significant percentage of the working class. As a result, the then Minister of Commerce, Mfanasibili Dlamini, was removed from his position (he had been selected as a leader of the lineage which would see to the selection of the Sobhuza's successor), (Booth, 1983; Davies, O'Meara & Dlamini, 1985).

The NNLC increasingly became a threat to the ruling class and the boat was rocked further by the dismissal of Mfanasibili, specifically within the close relations of the royal family. The ruling class, INM, could not easily accept the NNLC's victory and refused to accommodate its members into parliament and went on to implement plans that would totally exclude them from parliament (Davies, O'Meara & Dlamini, 1985). Within the space of a week, following the results of the elections, an NNLC candidate, Thomas Ngwenya, was described as an "undesirable person" and was deported to South Africa. In the months that ensued, the events that followed the small victory of the NNLC made bare just how far the traditional elite would go to have total and unchallenged power in ruling Swaziland. Thomas Ngwenya did however appeal and in September of 1972, the High Court ruled out his deportation order. When in October, he had to be sworn in as a member of parliament, the INM members of parliament (MPs) held a boycott to prevent his swearing in, "for a lack of quorum." The Swazi parliament, in November, passed an amendment to the Immigration Act which substituted the High Court with the prime minister as the one with the ultimate authority in a given matter such as an argument over citizenship. Ngwenya had his lawyers appealing to the High Court, declaring that the act passed was unconstitutional and further petitioned the Swaziland Court of Appeal. The Swaziland Court of Appeal had three prestigious South African judges; it had replaced the British Privy Council which could reverse decisions made over areas in question. It is the same court that on 29 March 1973, declared the Immigration Amendment Act unconstitutional (Booth, 1983).

On 12 April 1973, hardly two weeks after, the King Sobhuza II quickly declared a State of Emergency in a meeting attended by the cabinet, nobility and ranking officers of the Umbutfo Swaziland Defence Force (USDF); he had parliament dismissed and also dissolved all political parties, including the INM. Legislative, executive and judicial powers were all transferred to the monarchy. This meant that the king could exercise the powers of the

mentioned institutions by decree. He had his advisors aid him in all his actions and these included the cabinet and *Liqoqo* members (the aristocratic body which comprised mostly of princes and chiefs). Sobhuza's rigorous efforts to centralize power was evidently in response to the ruling out of the act passed in 1972 and ensuing labour unrest. His justification of ruling by decree and doing away with the parliamentary system drew on tradition and the "Swazi way"; that the constitution was inconsistent and incompatible with Swazi tradition as it dissuade the Swazi people from being loyal to the king (Booth, 1983; Davies, O'Meara & Dlamini, 1985; Daniel & Vilane, 1986).

As the king declared the State of Emergency, he simultaneously announced the formation of an army which would be loyal and responsible to the royal family and the monarchy. The national army would also serve to suppress opposition parties and movements that the king was very distasteful of- he had been, for a while, doubting the loyalty of the police force. All of these immediate changes and amendments to the political order of Swaziland was, again, justified to have been carried out as per the "Swazi tradition" (Booth, 1983; Davies, O'Meara & Dlamini, 1985; Daniel & Vilane, 1986).

Between the years of 1973 and 1978, beyond just the banning of all political parties, Sobhuza took measures to further crush trade unions. The biggest one of these, the Swaziland National Union of Teachers (SNUT) was banned. In the 1970s, about nine trade unions were registered and out of all of these, only one remained to be seen after the death of Sobhuza in 1982, the Bank Worker's Union. As part of the changes ushered in by the State of Emergency, Sobhuza also introduced detention without trial which resulted in the detaining of many Swazis that belonged to opposition parties and unions. It was the "six-month measure for sixty-day detention without trial" that marked the first of the detentions without trial. Detainees were held for long periods of time; notable figures that fell victim to this detention included NNLC leader, Dr Ambrose Zwane, Thomas Ngwenya and Prince Dumisa Dlamini (one of the figures who led the 1963 strikes). The measures put into action by Sobhuza were effective in stifling and crushing the opposition movement and as well as diverting the attention of the Swazi away from politics, even if for a short while (Booth, 1983; Davies, O'Meara & Dlamini, 1985).

## **The New Political Structure**

### **The Labour Movement**

Having diverted the attention of the Swazi away from politics, the country stabilized to calmness as Sobhuza had also made measures to silence opposition parties. Tensions had however remained and erupted in various ways that unsettled the monarchy. Labour strikes emanated, often characterized by violence. Railroad workers marched to the royal residence in 1975 and were turned away by the police with the use of tear gas. In 1978, Big Bend sugar-cane workers demonstrated (In March 1963, 2500 Ubombo Ranches Sugar Plantation workers in the same area, waged a strike that brought them to a confrontation with the police. This was followed by a legislation passed by the government which stipulated that no strike would be accepted as legal if its members did not issued out a three week prior notice, which some argued, was to prepare the police force in how it would deal with strikers. More strikes ensued regardless of the legislation; sawmill workers in Peak Timber Mill waged demonstrations, demanding pay increases, 1350 workers demonstrated at the Havelock Asbestos Mine for two and a half months, leading to another general strike in Mbabaene.), setting fields alight, and were also derailed by the police which used tear gas on them. In both cases, mass arrests were made and both working groups were demonstrating over issues such as that of wages and displayed dissatisfaction towards local and labour department officials. This kind of dissatisfaction with department officials put a halt to the hydroelectric project in the Ezulwini area, in 1982 (Booth, 1983; Simelane, 2007).

In 1977, teachers waged their boycotts and students aggravated the scene through violent strikes- these groups were also demonstrating against the political system. The teachers union (SNAT) with a membership of about 3000 teachers at that time, had been, for a long time, facing struggles with their wages which they deemed insufficient and difficult to live with. They complained about the inefficiency of the ministry of education as some teachers would go for months without a salary. The government issued out warning to the teachers to not continue with their strike; these warnings were overlooked by the teachers when in 1975, a salaries commission was established. This commission also then made inquiries over teacher's salaries and in 1976, made recommendations to have the teachers' salaries increased and to have an evaluation of the job system so that underlying problems could be addressed. The government was slow in response to the recommendations that came from the commission, the result of which was a mass boycott of classes by the teachers, in October

1977. The government's response to the boycott was a banning of the teacher's union and forceful attempts to have the teachers return to their work. Teachers retaliated with mass demonstrations waged in the two major cities of Swaziland, Manzini and Mbabane, and with the support from students, they caused a stir as they attacked government buildings and property, burned vehicles, and also stoned two cabinet ministers, which included the education minister. Such violence was reminiscent of the 1963 strikes (Booth, 1983; Simelane, 2007).

The police came hard on the demonstrators as they were given orders "to shoot if necessary." They managed the situation in not so long- two students were wounded- with the teachers and students returning to their schools. Sobhuza criticized the teachers heavily for the demonstrations and bitterly ordered them back to their classes. Some teachers walked out of the meeting, doing something that had never been done before when the king addressed people. The strikes of the 1970s were a clear indication of public sentiment towards the king's reversal of the process of democratization in the country. Groups that seemed to be mostly aggravated by the political system were seemingly the working class and the petite bourgeoisie. Their aggravation was also notable through the ritual (*muti*) killings which began in the mid-1970s which are believed to have been motivated by wage-earners and school-leavers. The use of *muti* was associated with a collaboration with *tinyanga* ("practitioners of muti") which would orchestrate such killings in extreme cases which would include the healing of a person, the reversal of a curse or unfortunate circumstance in the areas of business or love and other desperate needs that people came with. The 'medicine' would be created through the mixing of the flesh of a living victim with other ingredients to make the final product. The ritual killings of the 1970s were assessed to be indicative of the dissatisfaction and desperation from those who felt that the political institutions of the country were not serving them (Booth, 1983).

What came to be known as the *tinkhundla* regime succeeded in clearly drawing the line between the employed and unemployed through its use of the 'divide and rule strategy.' The 1973 decree did however ban political parties but that ban did not necessarily extend to trade unions. The royal regime did however take measures to define and contain the trade union movement, regardless of the International Labour Organization's (ILO) pressure for the Swazi government to accommodate trade union activity. Moreover, Simelane notes how the regime has further gone to the extent of defining for the trade unions what issues can be deemed labour-related and which cannot. Simelane places high regard on the potential and

power of the labour movement of Swaziland and states that its inability to wage a strong countermovement to the Swazi regime is due to the *tinkhundla* structure of governance which is often oppressive of progressive movements (Simelane, 2007).

Sobhuza's exclusive rule by decree ended in 1978 when parliament was reopened. An electoral system presided over the election or perhaps 'selection' of its membership in order to ascertain that it was dominated by those who were and were sure to continue to be loyal to Sobhuza and the traditional council. The reopening of parliament came with numerous changes; parliament could no longer bear the authority of making policies but could only "enact into law" the decisions that Sobhuza communicated. Daniel and Vilane describe this change in the functions of parliament as "a modernization of the *libandla*." The *libandla* had resembled a lacking form of democracy in pre-colonial times- it had males on the body which would permit or disapprove decisions that came from matters discussed. The reformation of the state was thus concluded with the reopening of parliament with measures put in place to ensure that the dominance of the royal elite was not threatened. The silencing of opposition parties and the control of the trade union movement, were all part and parcel of the process leading up to the resuscitation of parliament (Daniel and Vilane, 1986).

The new constitution that came with the reopening of parliament in 1978 was described as a combination of two systems- the Swazi traditional system and the Western democracy system. Institutions within this new structure included parliament, the cabinet, the *libandla*, the *liqoqo* and the monarchy. Some of these institutions are specific to the Swazi traditional system called the *Tinkhundla* system, whose structures were (and still are) used to 'elect' parliamentary members (Davies, O'Meara & Dlamini, 1985).

### **Tinkhundla System**

Along with this re-introduction of parliament was what could be said to substitute the existence of an "un-Swazi" form of political model- the *Tinkhundla* system of governance. The Order divided Swaziland into forty constituencies in which a representative was to be elected. An Electoral College would be formed by the forty representatives and would in turn elect representatives to go into parliament (Dlamini, 2006). Initially, the electoral system was not inclusive of the *tinkhundla* as their role was to recruit labour for the war effort during World War Two (EISA Election Observer Mission Report, 2009). The *tinkhundla* system

denoted “the Swazi way of life” and presented itself as a bridge between the modern and the traditional political control of the Swazi monarchy. The *tinkhundla* system ensured control of the state at a sub-regional level and this therefore meant that Swazis could be controlled in the rural and urban areas (Sihlongonyane, 2003).

However, in the 1978 Order, some problems surfaced with the formation of the *tinkhundla* system: the voter did not enjoy the privacy of casting their vote and more than just often, the person voted for by the electorate did not succeed into representing them in parliament, but rather ended up in the Electoral College. To note here about the existence of political parties, is that whilst they were (and still are) prohibited from gathering and challenging political ideals and that although they are even today not mentioned in the draft constitution, Chapter Four of the Constitution does allow for “freedom of assembly and association”. But then again, even with the recent uprising of April 12, 2011, the argument remains (from the Swazi government) that the Swazi Nation is not ready for a multiparty system and is much more content with the way things are- and this is another form of oppression as the population of Swaziland is not given the basic right of voicing their opinions and should they decide to hold political meetings, they face the brutality of the police force (Dlamini, 2006; Maroleng 2003; Sihlongonyane, 2003).

The banning of political parties has not succeeded in blocking attempts by different groups from asserting themselves as political parties would. Some of the forces that emerged included the NNLC, the Peoples United Democratic Movement (Pudemo) and the Swaziland Youth Congress. United under the Swaziland Democratic Alliance (SDA), they openly criticized the existing traditional system and called for political reform. Other groups that joined the SDA include Sive Siyinqaba Sibahle Sinje and the Swaziland Federation of Labour (SFL). Although the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions (SFTU) has had failures in organizing, it has however been active in advocating for reform. Political analysts have asserted quite strongly that any impact on the Swazi monarchy would have to come from the outside, the reasoning being that within the country itself, opposition groups have even become fewer due to the brutality of the police forces upon the groups which also get detained (Maroleng, 2003). This assertion warrants substantial consideration which will come out in the closing chapters of this dissertation.

When Sobhuza declared the suspension of parliament and began his rule by decree, he also announced the establishment of a royal constitutional commission which would deliberate on



a governing system that would best suit the Swazi context and its people. He gave the assurance that it would be a fair and just system that would replace the Western one, that it would be careful to accommodate specific and unique features of the Swazi custom. When the commission was done with the set work, Sobhuza communicated the basis of the new constitution; that the selection of the members of parliament (referred to as *libandla*) would be indirect, that the *tinkhundla* would give the king a list of nominees for approval and that he would decide on who was accepted or rejected for parliament and other positions. The king would have his representatives preside over the voting within the *tinkhundla* and this voting would not be carried out through the ballot but would be by public. Political parties were completely excluded from the system and they were also banned from holding public meetings. The role of parliament was limited to advising the king and deliberating on government proposals (Booth, 1983).

Xolani Simelane (2007) offers a coherent breakdown of the structure and hierarchy of the new political order represented by the *tinkhundla* system that Sobhuza maintained was reflective of both the Swazi traditional political system and the modern Western political system. Simelane describes Swaziland to currently bear resemblance of “a traditional dual monarchy” whereby the king and his mother rule together. His mother (Queen mother) is also referred in siSwati as the *Indlovukazi*. “Figure 1: The Tinkhundla Superstructure” is taken from Simelane’s (2007) dissertation and shows clearly how the *tinkhundla* system is structured with separate arms that have important functions.



At the head of the structure is the king himself, who holds and controls all powers of the institutions. As earlier stated, his power extends to the issuing of decrees, the banning and unbanning of whatever he so deems fit, the appointing of his advisors into the Swazi National Council, the Judicial Service Commission, the Prime Minister, the Attorney General and so forth. As the head of the executive, he elects his prime minister, cabinet, chiefs and judges; he appoints two thirds of the senate, ten members into the Lower House of Assembly and heads the army, police force and prison system. Over and above this, the king sits as the Chancellor of the University of Swaziland. He is also the commander in chief of the USDF and the “in trust of the Swazi nation” term, suggests that he is in full control of Swazi land. Interestingly, the king is also referred to as “*umlomo longacali manga*” which translated, means ‘he whose mouth utters no lie’- his word is right and final (Simelane, 2007; Maroleng, 2003).

Below the king is “*labadzala*”, a significant and influential group that is said to be an advisory body to the king and comprises of senior traditionalists, princes and princesses. Members of this group are not known to the Swazi public although their interaction is very close with the monarchy. The SNC (Swazi National Council) is a body with thirty members which are appointed by the king. It is also made up of princesses, princesses, chiefs and other ordinary people that gives it its public appeal. This is another advisory body and differs from *labadzala* in that its members are publicly known as is their appointment that follows that of the prime minister. Similarly, this body also serves to advise the king on matters relating to governance and tradition and more over, assesses bills in parliament before they are passed as law. Then there is the prime minister, which is also referred to in siSwati as *Indvuna yaseLudzidzini*, who is also significant in the traditional circle. His main roles are to ensure that order is maintained in the country, that chiefs manage their subjects with sufficient control in their chiefdoms and that they too are in order. Furthermore, the prime minister has to ensure that national and cultural events are attended by ‘subjects’- the prime minister is always male and is often viewed as very knowledgeable in so far as Swazi culture is concerned. He also maintains close contact with *labadzala* and the council of chiefs (Simelane, 20007).

The chiefs often serve as “an eye for the king” and work closely with the *indvuna* to make sure that royal events are attended to. Chiefs are found in both rural and urban areas and most are in the Council of Chiefs. The 55 *tinkhundla* centres each have their own *indvuna* which is usually elected after the parliamentary elections. Each *indvuna yenkhundla* and *bucopho*

come up with structures that will organize the people into organizations within the community. In effort to divert the attention of each community member, projects such as poultry projects and water schemes are established for the community to take part in. The *indvuna* and *bucopho* both serve as perhaps the eye of the chief and can go as far as issuing out an eviction order of any 'unfavourable' person in the community (this dissuades people from taking part in political affairs). The junior of *indvuna yenkhundla*, the *indvuna yemmango*, the *umgijimi* and *bandlancane* are all members of a given *inkhundla* and serve to communicate messages from the chief to the rest of the community and to follow up on them and make sure that they responded to accordingly (Simelane, 2007).

The lowest in the hierarchy of the *tinkhundla* system is *banumzane*. *Umunumzane welikhaya* refers to the man of the household. In his capacity he is to make sure that each member of his family is well-versed on each member of the community and their role. As a part of *bandlakhulu* in the *umphakatsi*, the *mnumzane* also forms a part of the king's regiments and through that regiment, takes part in royal duties. He is also directly linked to the *indvuna* and *bandlancane* and embodies patriarchy in as much as he entrenches it.

The modern aspect of what Sobhuza said was representative of the model within the new system of governance, is headed by a prime minister selected by the king. History has shown that the prime minister has always been a Dlamini with ties to the royal family. As it were, the prime minister is by virtue supposed to be heading cabinet and parliament. Parliamentarians in both the House of Assembly and the House of Senate are subordinates of the SNC which approves legislation. The role of the traditional government clearly defines that of civil government as all the activity of parliament is informed by information from the SNC, which receives its final mandate from the king. Because the nature of the *tinkhundla* structure is designed in such a manner that the appointees are not politically-conscious, even the civil government has appointees that are to ensure that no political agendas are tolerated within parliament. The senate has the power to veto any bill deemed as "undesirable", especially since more than 60 percent of it is appointed by the king. The *indvuna* serving at the local level is also there to guard against the politically-conscious (Simelane, 2007).

The king appoints two thirds of the senate and although smaller than the house of assembly, it deliberates on bills from the house of assembly which it then passes to the SNC. The Chief Electoral Officer is said to be a maternal uncle to the king and is as well appointed by the king himself. This officer reports directly to the king and his main duty is to preside over the

elections which practically means that he must make sure that the *tinkhundla* system is effective in eliminating undesirable politicians and linked groups. The Chief Electoral Officer also works closely with the chiefs in effort to ensure that people from the different *tinkhundla* turn up for the elections. The Judicial Service Commission (JSC) is a body of six members which are also the king's appointees. Its main function is to nominate candidates that the king may consider to appoint as judges. The king also appoints the Attorney General (AG) who sits as an unofficial member of parliament in order to ensure that bills that are unfavourable to the king are not passed as law. The Royal Swaziland Police, the Umbutfo Swaziland Defence Force and His Majesty's Correctional Services all make up the king's security forces whose duties are to instill order should the *tinkhundla* institutions experience difficulty in controlling the people. Members of the army are recruited at the different *tinkhundla* and royal villages referred to in siSwati as *etihoncweni*. The king's security forces are also expected to attend all royal events and be a part of a regiment and join in the weeding and harvesting of the king's fields (Simelane, 2007).

To have termed the political system of Swaziland as a "traditional dual monarchy" is significant in drawing out some understanding of what tools the monarchy uses to firstly, define itself and to justify its institutions and actions. Tradition has often been thrown around by the royal authorities; terms such 'un-Swazi' are reflective of this reference to tradition. In understanding the Swazi context, it is important to consider the role of tradition in the running of the country and how it is manipulated to further royal agendas. The establishment of the *tinkhundla* system was highly motivated with the ideal to do away with 'un-Swazi' elements that existed in the previous order and to have one which would carry elements that were reflective of Swazi customs. It is also evident that its institutions are webbed within traditional ways and methods and places significant emphasis on culture and loyalty to the king. The *tinkhundla* system is a clearly closely-knit and intricate system that controls its subjects from deep within the rural areas and also from the urban areas. One could suggest that the manner in which the *tinkhundla* system is structured, the manner in which it functions and the level of policing that it unleashes upon its subjects, resonates with George Orwell's text, 1984; bringing the image of "a big brother that is always watching you". How important is tradition and how significant is it in understanding the small yet strong monarchy that Swaziland is, and its level of resistance of progressive groups and the democratizing agenda.

## Tradition

The talk of culture/tradition as an influence in the sustenance of the monarchy is quite significant in understanding the psyche of the Swazi Culture. With the case of Swaziland specifically, culture and religion work simultaneously is usurping 'subject' loyalty to the regime. The terms 'culture' and 'tradition' will be used interchangeably and even though in the siSwati language (the language spoken by the Swazi people) they are assigned different names, they are as well used synonymously- culture (*emasiko*) and tradition (*imihambo*), (Debly, 2011). Debly sees a definite relationship between roles of culture and political power. He says that culture in Swaziland has distinguished a particular 'Swazi way of life' and is central to socio-political discourses (Debly, 2011).

The focus on culture also sheds light to the ways in which people imagine, mystify and contest culture for political ends and how as well elites use culture to "ordain fractured political realities" (Williams, 1991). It is interesting to note how cultural events influence the position of people and their attitude towards the monarchy in Swaziland. Anonymous1 exclaimed that the King was like a father to him and that God created for every creature to have a king and so could not understand why certain people would want to overthrow the monarchy and the rule of the King. Speaking specifically about the annual *incwala* cultural ceremony or religious ritual, a said "festival of the first fruits", he stated that attending such an event made one feel good, that it was special to "belong to the King" and dance along with him. He further stated that the atmosphere at the ceremony made one to stand in full support of the King. He said, "We become very happy to see the King, we are shocked by those who want the King removed from the throne. When we were born we found our elders in support of the King and we follow on the same footsteps. We love the King and are not oppressed by him. He is like a father that offers solution and guidance to his children," (Anonymous 1, September 3, 2012).

Also referring to the significant *incwala* ceremony, another interviewee stated that he saw no relationship between culture and politics as there isn't any discussion of politics during the *incwala* ceremony. He further stated that they were somehow encouraged to support the King and the status quo, and that this was through the positive feeling that was common during the event; "It is the pleasure and honour of keeping an old tradition alive", (Anonymous 2, September 3, 2012).

One other interviewee gave a different elaboration of the relationship of culture and politics in Swaziland; a response which was rather compelling and different from the rest. When asked to explain the meaning of *incwala* and share his experience of the ceremony and to comment on the relationship of the cultural event and the politics of the country, this is what he had to share: “It is fun. I enjoy myself very much and learn a lot about Swazi history through the songs sung and the way Swazis dance. The purpose of *incwala* is to unify the nation and it does that very well. It achieves this by having the people participate in something together, physically. It is like how going to church together unifies Christians and like how attending a soccer match together unifies supporters of a team...that sort of unification is important in a society to have. We do not have what they call in sociology, ‘alienation.’ The question of ‘the support of the monarchy’ is not really translatable in siSwati because in siSwati we talk of *bukhosi*, which refers to an institution of kingship and not referring to the King himself. This is what Swaziland is about. The term ‘monarchy’ presents a Western bias by its definition,” (Anonymous 3, September 19, 2012).

Anonymous 3 states that Swazi people like the King as a representative of that institution and that he exists as that institution. He says that it is however not about him as a person as to be ‘for the King’ is not to be for an individual (as the notion is rather misleading), but to be for an institution which he describes to be a totalizing institution that involves many clans and even ordinary people who are not of blood royalty. He continues with that the many clans and ordinary people are also very important to the formation of *bukhosi* as it is what people celebrate at *incwala*- Swazi nationhood as experienced through having this institution of *bukhosi*. “To personalize and talk of the king as a person is a very individualistic and Western perspective. Swazis think of relationships in a very relational way, not through an individualistic way. I see culture as politics and politics as culture. The division of the two emerged in Europe in the 1700s, it is not a distinction inherent to the Swazis. Consider for instance the role of a grandmother who is responsible for talking to the ancestors. In that capacity, she acts as a form of religious leader and at the same time, she is someone’s grandmother in a personal way and we do not see that distinction in Swaziland between her religious role and family role. The same idea applies to culture and politics,” (Anonymous 3, September 19, 2012).

The above response from the interviewee displays a passion for Swazi culture and an enlightened analysis of how one should perceive the culture of the Swazi people and the relationship it has with politics. Some critical and interesting questions that arise from that

interview: firstly, what do the people of Swaziland (those who are pro-regime change) associate change with? Do they want change that will substitute the king as an individual, the institution of kingship or the *tinkhudla* as a system? And perhaps these are critical questions to ask and have the movement be clear on. Chapter 3 and 4 will shed some light into this particular aspect of the type of change that was perceived by the movement or supporters of the liberation movement.

MacMillan (1985) states that the use of the term “traditional” in the motivation for the establishment of the new system (which was said to be guided by and “established along traditional lines”) is misleading in that there was nothing “old or inherited” in the *tinkhundla* system. As history had made evident, ‘tradition’ had been manipulated to mask the creation of “new and intended” institutions that were constructed in order to drive power into the control of what is defined as the ‘traditional elite.’ The *Liqoqo* (SNC) began as an informal group of councilors with no claim to power and no recognition from the state. This group rarely met and was hardly active as it was unknown. This *liqoqo* has evolved immensely over a sixty year period and has become a formidable group in the ranks of power within the Swazi government. MacMillan suggests that “the flexibility of tradition” accounts for this group’s evolution and that ‘tradition’ has shown itself to be a useful strategy that the royal elite used to establish itself as a superior group- its power having grown from distributed land that through customary tenure, stayed in the control of the Swazis (Macmillan, 1986).

Matsebula (1972) says that any established tradition can be altered by the monarchy as per the Swazi law and custom. The change since the 1900s in 1982 motivated Sobhuza to make amendments to the traditional lines that defined the *liqoqo* in order to adhere to modern times. This was also done to make sure that the *liqoqo* managed to deal with the political climate of the time. Sobhuza intended for this group to gain legal recognition and be sworn into parliament. The king had his plans carried out and on the 18<sup>th</sup> of June, the *liqoqo* was established in statutory law (Matsebula, 1972). In 1964, Booth notes that the king clearly made bare his skill at being a modern and westernized politician. He began with the plebiscite which he held to dissuade the British from holding elections and went on to forming his own representative political party (INM) in order to engage on equal terms in the political battle that had characterized the climate leading to independence (Booth, 1983).

Magongo (2009) says that Swazi politics has its roots deep within Swazi tradition and customary practice. The combination of traditional and modern forces produces the bulk of



political activity in Swaziland. Magongo draws on Spiegel and Boonzaier's definition of 'tradition'; that it is "the transmission of culture- the repeated handing down of ideas, conventions and practices which humans need in social interaction." Emphasis is placed on the aspects of tradition being continuous with adherence to practices of the past and so as tradition captures present behavior and norms, it also lends itself to the past through links to history. The perpetuation of historical norms shows how then tradition may be said to be rigid and conservative. Swaziland also lends itself to this definition as its tradition carries elements of past practices such as those of traditional marriages (Magongo, 2009).

Magongo states that one must however not be led to believe that Swazi tradition has been a mere perpetuation of historical practices but that it has proven to be a tradition that evolves and adapts and responds to modern norms, ideals and values. King Sobhuza himself has been said to have motivated for the incorporation of significant and characteristic features of both foreign and local traditions into the Swazi tradition. This is led to the depiction of Swazi society as a modern state which fuses traditional and western elements into its institutions. The evolution of the *liqoqo* is again cited as an example of the flexibility of tradition within the Swazi context. The use of tradition as a political weapon was initially detected in the 1920s and 1930s when Swaziland was faced with the advent of the colonial power. Tradition formed the basis of the independence constitution and enforced an identity with Swazi culture and custom which further certified the positioning of the monarchy, the king and his family (Magongo, 2009).

Perhaps to conclude here with regards to tradition, is that in understanding the nature of the hegemony of the Swazi state and specifically the royal elite, we must take a closer look at not only the nature of tradition but also how it has evolved within the state of Swaziland. The claim can be made that tradition in the Swazi context is reinvented to service and sustain an ideology of the monarchy. 'Tradition' could be understood then as a 'modernist' project of the monarchical power.

## **Religion**

The Swazi King's appeal to religion can perhaps be seen as an effort to strengthen his support. One may make sense of the role of religion in Swazi politics when considering a few points made by Steve Bruce (2003): "Religion binds people together under a shared God,

common morality and cosmology and the result is the creation of a form of order and stability. Religious practices also create social cohesion,” (Bruce, 2003).

One could argue that the Swazi elite holding power are aware of the basis of religious belief; that the commonalities that bind people together result in a measure of peace and stability and that they must take advantage of this reality. Order and stability would as well mean that people are less likely to contest the place of power that the king occupies. Bruce further suggests that, “By promising to the pious poor rewards in the next life, it reconciles them to their fate in this one god and thus discourages them from rebelling against their condition” (2003). Interesting to note as well is the aspect of religion as a potential threat to any political and social order as it points to an authority higher and above every person living. It also opens up room for challenging princes and potentates (Bruce, 2003: 11).

The case of Swaziland is unique in that the majority of the population believes in the Christian God and the King manipulates this by asserting that he is anointed and appointed by God- the result of course being that the greater percentage of the Swazi population immediately claims obedience and submits under the ‘chosen’ king. This would also mean that the position and power of the king will not be challenged and threatened as people would be prone to believe that the King is God-sent. To specifically allude to is a portion of Swaziland’s current King’s coronation address: “...For the years that I may, by God’s grace and mercy, be given to reign and serve you as your King, I shall endeavour to work, as my father did throughout his reign, to advance the unity, happiness and prosperity of my people. I pray that God will help me to discharge worthily this heavy task that has been laid upon me so early in my life. God bless you all,” (*Times of Swaziland*-Sunday, September 9, 2012). From the above address, there is the insinuation and motivation of the King’s position, as being ordained and placed by God to lead Swaziland.

As stated earlier, that religion binds people together under a shared God, common morality and cosmology and result is the creation of a form of order and stability (Bruce, 2003), it should not be surprising then that King Mswati III called for the construction of a 30 000 seat national church. His vision about the church was first laid out in 2006 and since then, the structure has undergone numerous forms of designing. The national church structure is estimated to cost about E300 million (approximately \$36 million). The structure was supposed to have begun in 2009 but was delayed by changes in the design. (*Times of Swaziland*- Sunday, July 29, 2012). Numerous questions arise with this new church and

perhaps once the church has been established, the internal structure of the leadership will be revealed- which will hopefully be interesting to review in looking at the relationship of royalty to the church and the relationship of the church/religion to politics.

The role of religious arguments is significant when one considers their role in public debates concerning political choices or the basis in which political choices are made (Perry,1997). The link between religion and politics is particularly interesting to assess in the case of Swaziland, where some religious events are celebrated at a national level, with the King posing as an ordained priest who offers a sermon- specifically, the Christian Easter celebrations.

In 2011, for example, the King hosted the Easter weekend public services and amongst other pastors, stood to give a bible lesson. His topic was on the matter of divorce and the report states that the pastors that were due to deliver sermons failed to tackle such a matter and pleaded that the King address it. These public services are common and unite Christians annually during Easter time, often at the Somhlolo National Stadium. The report states, “The King acknowledged the difficulty in interpreting the Bible. He said divorce was an earthly thing necessitated by worldly problems human kind face from time to time” (*Times of Swaziland* SUNDAY, April 24, 2011). In these Easter services, one would argue, the King positions himself as the Messiah who offers great teachings on many subjects.

There is also the sense that the King is spoken of as a divine being who has the influence and powers of God. In September 2012, the *Times of Swaziland* reported on the pardoning of former Cabinet minister, Mfomfo Nkhambule. This was through a submission of three heads of cattle which the King accepted as an apology. Nkhambule was said to have previously publicly criticized the King’s leadership in a column that he wrote in the Times of Swaziland. He spent about two years pleading for forgiveness from the King. He used the word “divine” to define the King’s acceptance of his apology. He goes as far as assimilating his criticism of the King to ‘adultery’. Nkhambule says, “The King’s wisdom and etiquette on any issue is sheer divinity at its best... My transgressions, specifically to the King, were tantamount to adultery and I will forever be learning to forgive myself” (*Times of Swaziland*, September 10, 2012).

The politics of Swaziland provide an interesting case study as the small sphere encompasses intricate and complex structures that shape the political atmosphere. The role of culture and religion in politics is particularly interesting when assessing how the populations are

influenced in supporting the King or “the institution of *bukhosi*,” as explained by Anonymous 3.

### **Swaziland under King Mswati III**

The ascension of the current king of Swaziland to the throne (on April 25, 1986, four years after the death of his father- King Sobhuza II.), Mswati III, brought little hope to the modernists who opposed the monarchy; if anything, King Mswati III worked at retaining all political power and as well retain the structure of the monarchy. Firstly, he sought to reform the constitution and established consultative commissions, which were led by his brothers, to gather the opinion of Swazis on the constitution. The Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) was rejected by pro-democracy groups before it could release its report which was due in the following four months. The chairman of the commission concluded that people were content with the monarchy system and therefore the King’s influence would be expanded and trade unions would be eliminated. The King later announced a Constitutional Drafting Committee (CDC) to conclude the final draft and he imposed the Internal Security Act (June 2001), which prevented political demonstrations and labour union activities. The CDC, in its conclusion of the final draft of the constitution, ensured that the King held all political power, remained the head of the executive and could still select his prime minister, cabinet, chiefs and judges (Maroleng, 2003; Matsebula, 1972).

From the above information on the prevailing structure of the monarchy, it is no wonder that these questions are often asked by those with an interest in African politics, and specifically Swazi politics: “Why does Swaziland remain authoritarian despite the democratic political changes that have occurred in other parts of the African continent since the 1990s? Does it mean that Swaziland is immune to political change?” (Sihlongonyane, 2003:155). Mfaniseni Fana Sihlongonyane, in his paper titled *The Invisible Hand of the Royal Family in the Political Dynamics of Swaziland*, also shares a similar concern with this dissertation, that despite the transition of most African countries towards democracy, Swaziland has remained autocratic.

Political parties in Swaziland are banned, the media is censored and labour movements are kept in check through an imposition of a sixty-day detention without trial, which also keeps the media and students from protesting against the policies of the monarchy (Sihlongonyane,

2003:156). The censoring of media expresses the magnitude of the King's influence. The state controls the media in Swaziland; one of the country's newspapers (*The Swaziland Observer* and the *Weekend Observer*) is owned and funded by the state (*Mail and Guardian*, April 15 to 20, 2011). Interesting to note is that in July 2012, this same state newspaper suspended two of its senior editors following reports that criticized the Swazi monarchy. Also suspended was the paper's financial administrator. The reports were deemed 'unfavourable' to the monarchy- they were reporting on a strike by public-sector workers which had come to last close to a month at the time, and as well reports on the intervention of South Africa's ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), which was to further motivate for the unbanning of banned political parties in Swaziland. A source was quoted as saying, "The feeling is that the newspaper has shifted from its monarchist disposition." To also note is that this state newspaper was suspended for a period of two years in the year 2000, due to "reports on a mother's lawsuit against King Mswati III for abducting her daughter", who is now one of the royal wives. The *Swazi Observer*, as a state newspaper, is owned and funded by *Tibiyo takaNgwane*. The Swaziland Broadcasting and Information Station (SBIS) and the Swaziland Television Broadcasting Corporation are also controlled by the state (AFP, July 16, 2012).

The *Times of Swaziland* is privately owned and is a widely read newspaper which, though treading very carefully, is sometimes critical of the government (EISA Election Observer Mission Report, 2009). Interesting to note here is that the country's independent paper has been said to have transformed into "a mouth piece and spy tool for the monarchy." This was published by the Swazi Diaspora Platform (SDP) as a press statement (the Swazi Diaspora Platform consists of a group of people from Swaziland, based outside Swaziland, the most being in Johannesburg, South Africa. Their aim is to create a platform into which reflection, engagement and open dialogue about the situation in Swaziland can be facilitated and accommodated- [swazidiaspora.blogspot.com](http://swazidiaspora.blogspot.com)). In a statement they state: "In what is the most shocking media scandal in recent time... The SDP has been reliably informed that well-known royal lackey and self-proclaimed *Times of Swaziland* Royal Correspondent, Senzo Dlamini- the same journalist who whilst employed by the *Times of Swaziland* defied all journalistic codes of conduct, campaigned and participated in the 2008 *Tinkhundla* elections, only to lose and come back to join the *Times of Swaziland* as a journalist- called the Royal police to arrest sports journalist, Ntokozo Magongo, after the latter made comments critical of the current political establishment, in a private conversation at the newspaper's kitchen..." This of course brings to question the integrity and credibility of the independent newspaper

and as well it should signal the lack of freedom that one has in the country to be critical of the political system (SDP, September 20, 2012). The internet has gained popularity only recently in the urban areas but has not reached its exploitative degree in the country. There is no body that offers a code of conduct to govern the reports made by the media on elections or other politically-related reports (EISA Election Observer Mission Report, 2009).

AnonymousJTS, a journalist in Swaziland, shared that the press in Swaziland is censored and that although you can be critical of government, you cannot extend that same criticism to royalty. “One can go as far as saying a country without a free press cannot claim to have free citizens”, AnonymousJTS.

From the time of King Sobhuza II, political parties were banned and even so currently, the Swazi government still stands in opposition to them. The country’s police force is still given the mandate to violently suppress any political demonstrations against the king and the monarchy. Recent events, among them the 12 April 2011 uprising in Swaziland, have shown police brutality in dispersing protestors, and the detaining of union leaders and reporters from outside the country. Police were deployed in schools and in both of Swaziland’s major cities (Mbabane and Manzini), and a 24-hour roadblock was put in place at Sidvashini area, before and after the day of the uprising (*Times of Swaziland*, April 12, 13, and 14 2011; *Swazi Observer*, 5 April 2011).

The existence of political parties in Swaziland has always been met with opposition and resistance from the government. They have always been halted in their operations as they have always been viewed suspiciously by those in power. Proposals to the colonial power for independence and self-governance for the Swazis, excluded the whole idea of political parties and the argument put forward was that the Swazi people were not ready for a multiparty system and that more especially they were a source of conflict and would therefore threaten peace (Dlamini, 2006). Remember Msibi (a history teacher and pro-democracy activist in Swaziland), asserts that the Siswati term *kuthula* means peace but also tends to mean silence: “The King and his bootlickers want us to be peaceful by being silent. But we refuse to be silent about the hunger and suffering we are feeling” (*Mail and Guardian*, April 15 to 20, 2011).

The banning of political parties has not succeeded in blocking attempts by different groups from asserting themselves as political parties would. Some of the forces that emerged included the Ngwane National Liberatory Congress (NNLC), the Peoples United Democratic

Movement (Pudemo) and the Swaziland Youth Congress. United under the Swaziland Democratic Alliance (SDA), they openly criticized the existing traditional system and called for political reform. Other groups that joined the SDA include Sive Siyinqaba Sibahle Sinje and the Swaziland Federation of Labour (SFL). Although the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions (SFTU) has had failures in organizing, it has however been active in advocating for reform. Political analysts have asserted quite strongly that any impact on the Swazi monarchy would have to come from the outside, the reasoning being that within the country itself, opposition groups have even become fewer due to the brutality of the police forces upon the groups which also get detained (Maroleng, 2003).

The assumption that the Swazi people are happy with the Swazi monarchy and that they are not ready for a multiparty system is largely contestable. The 12 April 2011 uprising (*Mail and Guardian*, April 15 to 20, 2011), is a prime objection to this fallacy. Previously as well, there had been groups (or political parties) that asserted themselves on the public realm and openly contested the oppressiveness of the Swazi monarchy. So in truth, Swazis, as a whole, have not been (and have not been for a long time) satisfied with the political structure of the Swazi government and would do anything to exercise their rights within a system that has reverence for the voice of the people such as a democratic state would. It may be granted that Swazi people are not entirely happy with how the country is run and the whole system of Swaziland; something important to consider here is whether or not it is the bulk of the Swazi nation or to rather identify the group of people that are seemingly displeased with the status quo. Importantly to probe into as well, is whether or not the Swazi people are actually ready for a multiparty system; for a democratic take-over. What would that mean? If indeed the April 12 Uprising was a success, who was positioned or ready to take over? What would have a successful revolution meant for Swaziland? These are some important questions that one must pose and answer to. They will be later explored in the following chapters.

Christian P. Potholm had, in the 1970s, assessed the future of Swaziland to be one with a stable government, which integrated tradition and political modernity and thereby enjoying overwhelming support from its' people (Potholm, 1972). Swaziland has always been a small, seemingly weak, and economically dependent state and its' current situation does not reflect Potholm's prophecy. To begin with, Swaziland has been declared as one of Africa's poorest countries and is near financial collapse. The IMF has put blame on the state for its' excessive spending. The April 12 2011 uprising was a public expression of the dissatisfaction felt towards the system of governance and the crumbling economy. Activists and students were

detained and the police made use of teargas, water cannons and rubber bullets to disperse the crowds demonstrating (Sowetan, May 20, 2011).

Shall one then dare ask what is unique about Swaziland and how the country is run? It is evident that the political system in itself is unique and intricate in how it is kept alive. There is an intense interplay of culture and religion in at least conquering the minds of the majority of Swazis. At an institutional level, the *tinkhundla* system and *Tibiyo takaNgwane* work as well to keep the monarchy standing and functioning in the manner in which it does. Hopefully this chapter has been able to offer at least a good glimpse of the structure of the Swazi government and what types of complexities and challenges the liberation movement was and is confronting. What hope is there then for the democratic movement to achieve a complete overthrow of the current regime with the support of a people who are able to rationalize and take action without fear?

AnonymousBN stated that there is a lot of fear in Swaziland and this fear cultures people to remain silent about their problems and that their silence is easily interpreted to mean that they are happy about the status quo. The following chapter looks at the activity leading up to the day of the uprising. The Swazi regime is clearly known to the progressive movement for its brutality in clamping down on any groups and activity that speaks against the current regime. It is the threats of punishment and obvious brutality of the state that instills more fear among Swazi people; to not dare challenge the state. The next chapter will as well help in setting apart the successful revolutions of the Arab Spring and the failed revolution of Swaziland and as well, we will see which of the theories mentioned in chapter 1 will help us better understand the activity leading up to the said April 12 Uprising and going forward.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE SWAZI UPRISING**

“We are spending a lot on the army but we are not anticipating what is happening in North Africa. The army is there to avoid such situations,” Finance Minister- Majozi Sithole, 2011.

The above statement issued out by Sithole in 2011 proves Diamond’s (2000) assertion to be true in this case when he says that the military in some African autocratic regimes challenge the path to a democratic dispensation because it serves to hold the state together and in place. Sithole clearly displays confidence in the army to function in this way.

This chapter is organized into four sections. In section one I explore the activity that detailed the atmosphere of Swaziland, especially the concerns prominent in the period leading up to the uprising. Swaziland at around the time of the uprising will be analyzed, influencers of the uprising, the economy of Swaziland, demonstrations that took place, police activity, government activity and its interactions with the democratic movement, will also be looked into. In this section, I argue that perhaps the biggest blunder made by the progressives behind the Swazi Uprising, was their announcement of the date of the uprising and the subsequent detail provided. This let down any potential and significant impact of the uprising as it unleashed state forces upon an unprepared and defenceless people. In section two, I consider and analyze the experiences of individuals that reveal the character of the regime. Their personal and individual encounters will further shed light on the atmosphere of Swaziland, leading to the uprising, from as further back as their experience of the Swazi political system goes. In this section I argue that the nature of the Swazi state is repressive and oppressive and through the use of all possible state apparatus, managed to control events of the uprising. In section three I detail the events on the day of the uprising alongside the experiences of the interviewees. This chapter will further relate the events of the day of the uprising, detailing all the activity that took place and the direction that the plans of democratic movement took. Importantly, as we go through this chapter, we should be able to more clearly pick out reasons for the failure of the revolution. Finally, I consider problem areas that are clear from the conclusion of the chapter- reasons identified to explain the unsuccessful revolution or the transition to a democratic dispensation in Swaziland. This material in turn is used to support my argument that the system of governance in Swaziland is strong and unjust and that it largely contributes to the stifling of the progressive movement and that although numerous

converging factors from the faults of the leadership of the uprising also contributed to the failure of the uprising, we cannot dismiss the power and strength of the Swazi state.

### **Leading to the Uprising**

Those behind the uprising are all anonymous except for the group's founder, who is also said to have initiated the campaign on Facebook, who goes by the pseudonym of "Jahings Dada". The Facebook page is called "April 12 Swazi Uprising!!!" and the description of the page is as follows: "Inspired by the North African uprisings in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya plus the collapse of the Swazi economy, the Swazi people will on this date stage the final demonstration against the Swazi monarchy. Our demands are that the king must step down from power, abrogate the fraudulent constitution and give power to an elected transition government that will lead the country to its first free multi-party elections A.S.A.P" ("April 12 Swazi Uprising !!!", Facebook).

There are a couple of important points to consider with the above declaration on the Facebook page. Firstly and most importantly, the date of the uprising is announced. It is made explicit in the name of the group itself. This has never been done in history and here, in the Swazi case, we have a revolution that is 'scheduled' for a given date. Secondly, the description lays bare the motivations behind 'the looming' uprising; besides the uprisings of North Africa, a major concern that we are let in on is the collapse of the economy of Swaziland. A third point that is made tells us about the agenda of the movement; to remove the king from power, do away with the traditional constitution and have power transferred to an elected "transition government." The call for a democratic dispensation is not made explicit and nor can we conclude that an "elected transition government" insinuates a democratic take over. Rakner and Skage (paper retrieved 03 August 2014) state that significant about the demonstrations in African countries in the 1990s was that groups came out with clear and concise political demands.

Prior to the actual day of the uprising, campaigners had promised to have a hundred thousand people marching into the country's main city centers (Mbabane and Manzini) to declare, not only a democratic Swaziland, but one that is also free from the dominance of the royal family. Their demands were specific to their call for democracy and an end to the monarchy. They stated that power must be handed over to a transition government which would be

elected by the people of Swaziland and that “the king must vacate office immediately and go on vacation” until the Swazi people had decided on what was to happen to the monarchy and what role it could possibly have in the future of a democratic Swaziland. Other concerns that campaigners had were over wealth redistribution, the creation of an egalitarian society, health facilities, free education and the elimination of all traditional structures (Kenworthy, 2011). These concerns and demands began to come out clearer in conversations and in articles that ensued following the establishment of the Facebook group.

The campaign itself claimed to be unaffiliated and called upon all political parties and civic organizations to take a leadership role. People from all walks of life and with different political inclinations were called to discuss the problems of their country. Campaigners tried to secretly recruit more participants in major city centers to ensure that the campaign would be truly national in scope. Several organizations within and outside Swaziland showed their support of the event; the South African based Swaziland Solidarity Network (SSN), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), Swaziland United Democratic Front (SUDF), the Swaziland National Union of Students (SNUS), the Swaziland Democracy Campaign (SDC) and some Swazi trade Unions and political parties (Kenworthy, 2011).

Perhaps one can suggest that an unaffiliated campaign can be potentially problematic. There is a need for a solid leadership; revolutionary activists. It may have not been a plausible idea to declare that all actors could assume a leadership position. The intention was perhaps noble in that it motivated every Swazi to take a leadership role in matters affecting their destinies yet in reality not everyone could lead, as people seek a leadership that they will identify with and get direction from. As Dix (1984) also suggests, the actions of the leadership can change or break conditions, further placing importance on the existence of a clear leadership. The successes of the democracies of sub-Saharan Africa were aided by international pressure that came with financing. Swaziland received little support from COSATU which, along with exiles and liberation movements from Swaziland, advocated for democracy in the country. This is as far as ‘international support’ or intervention in the country went.

Showing a clear indication of anxiety over the potential impact of the April 12 campaign, the state ensured that the police and overall security forces were well prepared before the actual date of the uprising. The army was sent to Pakistan for training and significant quantities of military equipment was purchased and brought into the country. The military budget was raised and came to be equivalent to that of the health budget. Majozi Sithole, the Finance

Minister of the Swazi government, acknowledged this to the French news agency, AFP, that they were indeed spending a lot on the army but stated that they were not envisioning anything like what was happening in the North African countries (Kenworthy, 2011). An obvious shortfall of announcing the date of the uprising was that it gave the Swazi regime opportunity to arm itself against the opposition and prepare well to manage the worst of situations that may befall the state on the said date. And what we see here again is the intrinsic role of the military and armed forces which is clearly to protect the interests of the monarchy and the royal elite.

The Minister of Labour and Social Security was mandated to make efforts to ensure that demonstrations did not materialize. The media in Swaziland largely and more specifically quoted government sources and shunned the campaigners of the uprising in what was dubbed “a smear campaign” by Facebook campaigners. Swazi citizens were further intimidated by the regime in effort to prevent them from participating in what would be the upcoming demonstrations. The country’s Prime Minister, Sibusiso Barnabas Dlamini, issued out warning and said that the security forces would not hesitate to put an end to the protests and the police commissioner further added that everybody would be perceived as a suspect up until they were proven otherwise. Before the actual day of the uprising, the police had already started arresting people believed to be key players in the event. Maxwell Dlamini, a student leader, was arrested prior to the uprising. Numerous others were detained from the day the event began up until the 15<sup>th</sup> of April. These detainees included the leadership of political parties and progressive groups that took part in the event, the leadership of the trade unions and extended to anyone suspected of playing a part in the uprising. Some people were unjustly harassed, interrogated and sometimes arrested whilst going about their own business (Kenworthy News Media, 2010).

### **Interviewee Experience**

I spoke to a number of people that defined the leadership (at least one could point them out) of the demonstrations, some of whom were also active in recruiting people to participate in the call for democracy in Swaziland. Amongst the interviewees are also those who were both directly and indirectly involved in the uprising; people that are politically conscious and have opinions about the Swazi struggle; not only opinionated but also with an experience of some sort through their involvement with unions, parties or other organizations. They each detailed

their personal experiences of the Swazi political system, the events and atmosphere characterizing the road to the actual day of the uprising.

Mangoba Nxumalo, now a journalist of a prominent publication in South Africa (Johannesburg), was, around the time of the Swazi Uprising, based in Swaziland. He was involved in the youth movement, the Swaziland National Union of Students (SNUS), and had recently joined a union for journalists in the country, Media Workers Union of Swaziland. He was also part of the mass democratic movement and he describes himself as a “militant” and a “foot soldier”. Nxumalo says to have been active in mobilizing people through all kinds of possible propaganda as he distributed pamphlets, partook in graffiti works, conducted talks and by manipulating the online space. He states that they had challenges spreading word of an uprising on radio and television or schools because the monarchy owns those media channels and public schools would be risky as the regime establishes its propaganda through the syllabus’ taught at schools (Nxumalo, 2013). Here, the main challenge for the progressive movement seems to have been taking over the control of the institutions of the state and using them to reach the greater population of Swaziland in more effective ways.

Nxumalo shares that it was at a Pudemo Congress meeting in which it was decided that two dates would always be highlighted in the organisation’s calendar and that those dates would be the 6<sup>th</sup> of July (when Pudemo was founded) and April 12 when political parties were banned in the 1973 decree by the current king’s father, King Sobhuza II. The difference then with April 12, 2011, was that there was noise and motivation that came from the Arab Spring. Normally what would happen in the past is that Pudemo in partnership with Cosatu would stage border blockades on the day and disrupt the normal order of the day. Other members of Pudemo would be deployed elsewhere in the regions of the country to conscientize the people of Swaziland about the issues prominent in the country, the movement’s struggle and agenda. Admittedly, Nxumalo states that the uprising in itself was not planned. He says that it began as a popular struggle with no concrete plan. His understanding of events was that Richard Rooney picked up that there was a Facebook group campaigning for the overthrow of the Swazi government and because his blog is widely read, some media houses picked this up as well and the response became overwhelming. The media began asking for interviews and from there, the SSN (Swaziland Solidarity Network- which operates in South Africa and advocates for a transition to democracy in Swaziland) fueled the media with statements of an uprising ensuing in Swaziland. Nxumalo states that one could not simply denounce the hype as it was received as an opportunity to rally and do something about the status quo in

Swaziland. And so with that, the mobilizing, creation of posters and pamphlets began, as did the spread of propaganda (Nxumalo, 2013).

There are two important points to pick from what Nxumalo shares. Firstly, that because it was a Pudemo resolution to have April 12 commemorated, we can already assume members of the party as undisclosed leaders of the uprising. Secondly, that the uprising itself had no actual basis of a plan, that it just merely developed along with the winds of change. This is a very important piece of information in the interrogation of the reasons behind the failure of the Swazi Uprising. The lack of planning and thought behind the uprising speaks to why converging factors did not create any impact, let alone succeed in penetrating the institutions of the Swazi regime.

Leading towards the uprising, there was the SSN in South Africa which was feeding the media with word of an uprising in Swaziland and so in essence, formed the leadership of the uprising in South Africa. Nxumalo was however quick to point out that an immediate weakness was that the statements issued out by the SSN were detached from what was actually happening on the ground in Swaziland. Those within the borders of Swaziland were then faced with a disproportionate response from the government because from the moment it heard of the looming uprising, the government set off to prepare all its security forces, as mentioned earlier, and began instilling fear in the ordinary life of a Swazi who may have not known previously about the uprising. “Even with their response of strengthening the military, we played into the enemy’s hands and continued to push word of an uprising”, said Nxumalo. He highlights some of the problems defining the Swazi struggle to being the high rate of unemployment, poverty, high levels of inequality and the breakdown of the economy. Between the years 2010 and 2011, there was a great number of Swazis migrating into neighbouring South Africa seeking better opportunities and a better life. Nxumalo says that this huge number that left Swaziland speaks volumes about the problems that Swazi’s are met with and are forced to escape due to the unchanging role of the monarchy (Nxumalo, 2013).

Pius Vilakati, a Swazi democracy activist, former President of the University of Swaziland’s (UNISWA) Student Representative Council (SRC) in 2008, and also a former prominent member of SNUS and at that time, an underground member of Pudemo, now lives in South Africa as an exile. In early 2010, Pius was heavily involved in the student movement and played a key role in the SNUS campaign to improve the level of education in Swaziland. He worked hard at pushing student issues and grievances to the attention of the Ministry of

Education. His description of events leading up to the uprising are a build-up of past injustices and struggles that he has been conscious of and has been a part of protesting against. He begins by describing the political system of Swaziland as being a 'monarchical dictatorship.' King Mswati III had once described the political system of Swaziland as a "Monarchical Democracy"; Vilakati refutes this and states that the term "democracy" is misused in the King's description. Vilakati says that the monarchy of Swaziland is deeply entrenched within the *tinkhundla* system of governance, which manipulates religion and culture to contain people. He mentions that the mere fact that the King and the monarchy can never be criticized on national media (mainly because the King stands above the law and can declare illegal what he decides) communicates that there is nothing democratic about the Swazi monarchy (Vilakati, 2013).

On February 2010, Vilakati was detained with other students following an organized march over scholarship policies set by the government. They had taken them as students before the march could begin and were separated. Later that same day when they were releasing them, Vilakati says to have been pulled aside by the regional commander of the Manzini region in which they were detained, and was told that he was being closely watched as he had been spotted entering offices that were believed to be politically affiliated. He was threatened against taking part in marches as well. Vilakati states that investigations made on his side revealed that the regime believed him to be a member of the banned Pudemo party, but that they had no conclusive evidence (Vilakati, 2013).

Later that same year of 2010, in May, Vilakati recalls that the movement lost a comrade, Sipho Jele. He was a member of the banned Pudemo political party. Jele was arrested during a May Day rally for wearing a t-shirt with the Pudemo logo. Vusi Masuku, the national police spokesperson, said that Jele was charged under the Suppression of the Terrorism Act of 2008, which further put a stamp on the prohibited freedom of expression, association and of assembly. The act made it illegal to wear any politically affiliated item of clothing ([www.news24.co.za](http://www.news24.co.za), May 2010). Following his arrest, Sipho Jele was later reported to have been found dead, hanging from the rafters of a toilet at the Sidvashini Correctional facility in which he was kept. This happened on the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 2010. The police issued out a statement stating that he had committed suicide. Members of the movement denounced this report and clearly said that the police had killed him. His aunt, a nurse by profession, after seeing and quickly inspecting Sipho's body, stated that it could not have been that her nephew had committed suicide as she took note of his swollen face and bloody nostrils (The

Swazi Observer, 2010).

Vilakati shares that he was a speaker at Sipho Jele's memorial and again at the night vigil which was held at Jele's home at Ncabaneni. Vilakati says that they were tipped off and told that the police were on their way to get him. He says to have left and was driven out in the early hours of the morning, moments before 4 am, on a dark winter morning. Pius says that they passed the police along the way where they were still assembling and also passed two road-blocks which had not begun operating. More than 500 police had come together from all regions of Swaziland to gather and express the regime's brutality on the people gathered to send the comrade off. Police and warders combined. "I was lucky to have been tipped off and left at that time that I did because had I left even ten minutes later, they would have caught me. I was later told that when some police got in, they went straight to where I had been seated, only not to find me. I left as though I was going to freshen up as I had been doing throughout the night and that is how I escaped", recounts Vilakati. The somewhat 500 police that had featured at Sipho Jele's funeral disrupted the order of events such that the family called off the funeral and arranged it for a later date (Times of Swaziland, 2010). Vilakati had been enrolled at UNISWA, doing his 4<sup>th</sup> year in Law. He was due for his last exam the following day, which he could no longer sit for. When the police could not find him at the funeral, they focused on capturing him at the exam room on the following day. This made it possible for Vilakati to cross the border without any difficulty, as no police were there standing guard. Reports came that the police went to the exam room, only to find that he was not there (Vilakati, 2013; The Swazi Observer, May 2010).

By late 2010, Vilakati says to have been already trying to familiarize himself with the situation in exile. He got involved with the establishment of a campaign that came before the revolutions of the Arab Spring. Through their campaign they began conscientizing people about the problematic nature of the Swazi monarchy and were clearly saying that it must go. As exiles, they pushed their agenda online as they knew that the Swazi media would not publish their views. So each individual exile established a group on Facebook and were that and were a couple of pages running- there was even one started by the SSN. Of course there then came inspiration from the events of the Arab Spring to arouse talk of a revolution and the interest in these pages was overwhelming to say the least. "We then decided to mainstream conversations by deciding on allowing for 'Jahings Dada's' group to continue to run and so that is it how it all began. Vilakati does reiterate that the campaign against the monarchy had however begun months before the events of the Arab Spring (Vilakati, 2013).



Two quick things to highlight here as well; Jahings Dada was not the sole mastermind of the establishment of the Facebook page but the Facebook page was a group decision and effort. Secondly, exiles had already been busy with projects that had them working on the political situation in Swaziland which involved reaching the masses and conscientizing them of prevailing injustices. This does away the assumption that there were no activists that pushed the agenda of removing the king from power in Swaziland. Perhaps the question would be a question of how strong their actions were and a further probe into those actions.

Pius Vilakati states that the road to the uprising, from even years back, was characterized by some issues that were and continue to be of great concern within society which include that of the economy. The country had been experiencing an economic meltdown, there were threats to cut the salaries of civil servants, pensioners could not receive their pension, the level of oppression meant that there was no freedom of expression, assembly, of speech etc., the scholarship policy was still being contested as there were unjust changes made to it. The atmosphere was thick with dissatisfaction from citizens; teachers and civil servants took to the streets to demand pay increases (Vilakati, 2013).

Reuben Van Vuuren, a former chief marshal of Swayoco (Swaziland Youth Congress), now an exile living in South Africa, says that one must always understand that years of struggle and suffering of the people will display themselves in different opportunities and with that said, the road leading to the uprising can be traced back to as far as 1973, where the king began to rule by decree and established his tone by banning political parties. He states that there have been numerous strikes that by scale were far bigger and more threatening than the uprising was. “This is of course to say that circumstances and opportunities cannot be constant as would be the state response”, said Van Vuuren. He states that his road began when he was still in high school. He had taken part in a riot at school led by other students which were Swayoco members. It was then that he became conscious of the injustices of the Swazi political system. It was only after high school that did he then become a fully-fledged member of Swayoco and became active. The first rally that he attended and led was staged in the Manzini town, where some comrades got arrested and he luckily escaped.

Van Vuuren shares that operations were started (sparked by the death of Sipho Jele in 2010) which saw the bombing of government buildings, houses of prime ministers, bridges and the like. At this point, Vuuren tells this dissertation that he was growing uncomfortable with the questioning that had been happening; he would have daily visits to his home from the state

police and would be interrogated. He says that at one time, the police came with information that made him wonder where they may have received it from; information that may have been shared in private meetings he had attended with comrades. It was at that point that he felt distrust towards his comrades and because of the unsettling feeling he had, he did not want to risk being jailed and potentially experience Sipho Jele's fate. Van Vuuren says that he escaped when he saw that more interrogations would follow, "I fled before they could lay me with any charges... I left without a word and escaped into South Africa" (Reuben Van Vuuren, 2013).

Philile Masango, a former Swazi journalist (in broadcasting), has since moved to work in South Africa. The year 2011 was a year of her becoming conscious of the political situation in Swaziland after claiming ignorance for years. She recalls being in Swaziland in the month of the uprising- she was scheduled to be the Master of Ceremony (MC) for an event that she had been invited to. She says that she had been offered a lift by the police when leaving the event as her friend had taken her car. On their way, the conversation in the car led to the then upcoming uprising. She says that the police said to her, "Please don't tell us you are part of them"? To which she replied, "What if I am?" Masango said that the car was stopped and she was ordered out. She quickly said that she was only kidding and the car continued on. In conversation still, the police clearly stated that their allegiance was with the King. This one incident marked her turning point; it made her sit up and pay attention to what was actually going on. She says that her consciousness had to be personal before it became political. She recalled her older sister whom is a teacher. For the longest time she has known her to always complain about her salary and overall difficulty in supporting her family. She also spoke of her mother who is a pensioner. In 2011, there was a teacher's strike which called for salary increases and the government also announced that pensioners would not receive their money (which was about E250 per month which is about 30.68 US dollars). These are the immediate issues that Masango could single out a couple of days before the said uprising and it is her close family members that she immediately witnesses to be affected by the status quo (Masango, 2013).

Before moving into South Africa, Masango had been working for the state-owned Swazi TV and she was dubbed "the protagonist for His Majesty King Mswati III". She says that this was indeed so as by virtue of working there you were indeed serving him. (Masango, 2013). The censoring of media expresses the magnitude of the king's influence and control in Swaziland. The state controls the media in Swaziland; one of the country's newspapers (The

Swaziland Observer and the Weekend Observer) is owned and funded by the state. The Swaziland Broadcasting and Information Station and the Swaziland Television Broadcasting Corporation are also controlled by the state. The Times of Swaziland is a privately owned and widely read newspaper that, though treading very carefully, is sometimes critical of the government. The internet has gained popularity only recently in the urban areas but has not reached its' exploitative degree in the country. There is no body that offers a code of conduct to govern the reports made by the media on elections or other politically-related reports (EISA Election Observer Mission Report, 2009).

Furthering her studies in South Africa at the University of the Witwatersrand made Masango realize her intellectual capacity; she was encouraged to question more and speak her mind and with that, she realized that she could not enjoy the same freedoms in Swaziland, even in the classroom. Masango says that she would always be amazed at her classmates, at how freely and easily they spoke. Lecturers would encourage her to share her ideas in class and as well express herself even in other forms of expression such as in writing. During her studies, she worked for Kayafm Radio and that job exposed her to a world in which authorities could be questioned and be demanded to respond to critical questions. She said to have come from a background in which the authority would pull you aside if you happened to have thrown an unfavourable question to them. Masango says that some of the problems that she is quick to point out and that further encompass the issues that people stood up against in the uprising, are all along the lines of freedom, and at a personal level, freedoms that were promised to her as a journalist. "I was shut up before I knew I could speak. I feel that the Swaziland political system was effective in robbing me of my confidence in what I am capable of and the potential that I have to be greater in each story that I cover" (Philile Masango, 2013).

Musa Isiah Nhlanganiso Hlophe is a "retired business executive" (as he refers to himself) who moved into a new field altogether, after his retirement. He now heads the Swaziland Coalition of Concerned Civic Organisations (SCCCO), a non-partisan, non-profit organization that deals with political issues in terms of issues of governance, human rights, the rule of law etc. His office is involved in the struggle to motivate the return to multiparty governance in Swaziland. Sometimes they are viewed as a political party but they are not about political power but about how political power is exercised such that people can enjoy being governed in a democratic space, "as it were 5 years after independence 1968-1972." Although political parties such as that of Pudemo occasionally disagree with the agenda of the SCCC, specifically that of a "return" to a prior state, Musa insists that there existed a

multiparty state where the King was constrained by the constitution- where there were things that he had to do and could not do because of the power of the constitution. The King's role was mainly in tradition. The constitution clearly defined how the King could even choose the 30 people that he put into parliament- for instance, all groups in society had to be represented, the disabled, both genders, black, white and coloured people. Hlophe says that that restriction on the King died away as he claimed all power to himself and by extension, all of that power rests with his son, the current king of Swaziland (Hlophe, 2014).

Hlophe says that his life in politics began when he was a student and was involved in student politics. From there he got employed and became a trade unionist and led workers. When he considers the road leading to April 12, 2011, or even to the current economic crisis that Swaziland finds itself in today, he is taken back to the year 1983, a year in which Swaziland experienced an "undeserved inflow of investment" which saw the Matsapha area buzzing with activity and businesses. When 1990 came with the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in South Africa, Hlophe says that businesses realized that business in South Africa would change for the better. Since that time to date, Hlophe says that there has been a shrinking of investment in Swaziland. He says that the CocaCola company remains because nowhere else can it be expected to pay the type of tax that it pays in Swaziland. "There has been an erosion of trust in this country. The big 1996 strike showed huge numbers of civil servants voicing out their concerns but the king did not listen, instead, he worked against the progressives. Businesses continue to leave because the king continues as well to run the country like his own private farm" (Hlophe, 2014).

Hlophe says that with the coming of the uprising, there had been numerous demonstrations that provided the democratic movement at large with opportunities to stage an uprising even earlier than the said date. In March, Hlophe recalls that the lawyers had themselves staged a strike that went on for a couple of months. Their issue was over the lack of judiciary independence and that because of the laws and political system of the country, one could not go to the courts with confidence if challenging the state. The teachers as well held a strike- about 10 000 teachers took to the streets- and again presented a lost opportunity for not everyone joined in to rally with the teachers. They rallied over economic issues and their salaries. Overall, Hlophe says that the problems that Swaziland is faced with are economic issues, the rule of law and that there is no investment in socio-economic development as the army takes priority. The health system is also of concern as those in power do not even believe and trust in their own infrastructure; they always fly to an outside country to seek

medical attention. Hlophe says that royal greed has destroyed the health system, the standard of education in the country and that no investment has been made in the country's infrastructure (Hlophe, 2014).

Maxwell Dlamini says that he may have been born a rebel of some sort but from the early stages of high school, he knew to engage with the administration over issues that students had. He also claims that exposure to people who were involved in political organizations helped to conscientize him as well. When he got to UNISWA he joined SNUS and got involved with student politics and later joined Swayoco/Pudemo. Maxwell describes Swaziland as an undemocratic state which is led by an autocratic monarchy that has vested all power within itself. He says that the problems that the Swazi faces everyday are due to the 1973 decree that banned all political parties and which subsequently eliminated all freedoms (of association, assembly, speech etc) and that the state continues to actively instill fear amongst people. "People cannot gather to discuss their economic grievances and concerns because the result will be that they will be put into prison, tortured or forced into exile." Maxwell states that with the coming of the uprising, there were already issues of high levels of poverty, prominence of HIV/AIDS within society, the economic meltdown which could be linked to state corruption, mal-administration and nepotism, unemployment resulting in people living on handouts, and the education system which does not ensure that children flourish, especially after high school. He further says that all the problems that Swaziland faces can be solved by replacing the current system with a participatory system which will be accountable and be held responsible (Dlamini, 2014).

In 2011, Maxwell Dlamini was the president of SNUS and leading to the uprising, they, as the student movement, were active on social networks, galvanizing people to take part. They were involved in demonstrations, supporting the teachers' strike, that of civil servants and others that took place. The student body came together to call for the removal of the current regime and unfortunately, the regime responded heavily and ensured that some comrades did not see the day of the uprising. Maxwell says that he was arrested when returning into Swaziland from South Africa. "It was on the 10<sup>th</sup> of April 2011 that I returned from South Africa, I had gone for a press briefing as we were making all efforts to mobilize the international community. I returned to find a roadblock in which I was arrested. I was with a former colleague and activist, Musa Ngubeni. We were charged under the Suppression of the Terrorism Act of 2008 and this charge was changed in court and our case was for the possession of explosives. That case has been dragging ever since. We spent 10-12 months in

jail because they had denied us bail. I spent four months in isolation- I suffered a stroke due to stress and mental breakdown and spent three weeks recovering in hospital. After that I was returned to prison but joined other prisoners. We were released on bail, following a campaign by the Britain and Denmark students” (Maxwell, 2014).

The Free Maxwell Dlamini Campaign helped in getting international support in pressuring the government of Swaziland to free Maxwell Dlamini and Musa Ngubeni. The government released Maxwell Dlamini and Musa Ngubeni on bail and charged them the highest bail amount ever charged in the history of Swaziland- E50, 000 each (which is equivalent to about 4, 650 US Dollars). The campaign assisted in raising the funds as more supporters of the campaign made contributions ([www.freemaxwelldlamini.wordpress.com](http://www.freemaxwelldlamini.wordpress.com); [www.nus.org.uk](http://www.nus.org.uk)). Maxwell says that the campaign has taken a nose-dive of lately as they are out of jail and are waiting to hear their judgment.

Palesa Dlamini, currently the Secretary General of SNUS and a member of Swayoco/Pudemo states that her concerns are largely in education. She says that their struggle as students has been about quality, affordable and accessible to all education. Palesa Dlamini finds that the education system of Swaziland is not competitive, that the standard is low and creates a great challenge for students to offer something new, different and useful in the work field. She says that even high school education is problematic because students often times do not qualify to get into outside universities. Palesa Dlamini shares her experience about a common problem that most Swazis experience- that of the health system. This is what she says, “I have tonsils and they get so bad that I sometime get hospitalized. I have experienced that when I get to the hospital, I will have the first problem of having to endure through long and slow moving lines. At that point I am in pain and cannot even talk. When finally admitted, you realize that the hospital is infested with rats. Bathing facilities are non-existent as a person admitted has to bring their own basin. What pains the most is that the government prioritizes defense and spends very little on health. The unemployment rate is ridiculously high and we have a country that creates people that cannot survive by their own means, people that are not creative enough to innovate new ideas and channels of business but that rather wait to be given jobs”.

Palesa Dlamini says that in preparation for the uprising, students ‘illegally’ met and discussed all the issues that they had and wanted addressed. The vice chancellor of the university had disbanded the SRC saying that they were not allowed to call meetings. Students planned to

meet each evening and each speaker would stand at the center when expressing an idea so that spies could be confused in identifying who may have been chairing the meeting. They continued to plan, get word out on the uprising and distribute pamphlets (Palesa Dlamini, 2014).

Musa Sifundza, a teacher by profession, a member of the Swaziland National Association of Teachers (SNAT), and a Pudemo member, says that his journey began by merely experiencing his mother's life who is now retired but was a teacher and a member of the same union and led a branch and continued on at national level- his mother's life conscientized him. Issues that he says to concern him are those of freedoms; the freedom of speech, association, freedom of the press etc. As a leader of a branch himself and as a teacher, he witnesses daily the level of poverty that the country is faced with. He teaches in Swaziland's poorest region, the Lubombo region, and says that poverty glares at him through the eyes of the children that he teaches, day in and day out. Sifundza says that it is the very same poverty that affects the lives of these children who do not do well in school because of the suffering that overwhelms them at home. As a teacher, he is also aware of the issue of little pay and that is one of the main problems that as civil servants they have always experienced with the monarchy and the prospect of having the king overthrown was a good motivation for most to rally with the democratic movement as situations demanded an alternative (Sifundza, 2014).

Wandile Dlodlu is the coordinator of the Swaziland United Democratic Front (SUDF), a product of the student movement (Swayoco) and now a fully-fledged member of Pudemo, says that history as a high school subject opened up his mind into questioning the status quo. Learning about world wars, apartheid, slavery and other topics in history, was his genesis in politics and in tertiary, it was easy for him to take part in student politics. He also became the chairperson of the SRC. In analyzing Swaziland, Dlodlu says that the main problem is the monarchy; the domination and supremacy of the institution of a monarchy, over everyone and everything in Swaziland. He says that it is very problematic that government has no separation of powers. Concerns that he has include the lack of jobs, the fallen economy, poor health system, mediocre education system and the lack of recreational facilities for the youth. Sharing a personal encounter with the state before the uprising, Dlodlu says that a day before the uprising, he was in town and out of nowhere, he noticed that police were following him. About fifteen of them walking on either side of his; they stopped when he stopped, sat down when he did and literally escorted him wherever he walked. He says that they attracted

attention to him. Wandile Dlodlu described this moment as very weird and understood that the police were trying to send a message by attempting to instill fear in him. He says that on that day he did not sleep at his home and for the following three days after the incident (Dlodlu, 2014).

One can perhaps draw out that some of the main issues that the people of Swaziland found (and still find) themselves confronting and struggling with, are that of the high levels of inequality, poverty and unemployment. There also tends to be a major outcry over the education system of the country and the economic meltdown does no justice to the already suffering youth of the country. By and large, the oppressive nature of the monarchy is also a major problem as is the state's lack of interest in investing in the health system of the country and as well as on its infrastructure. It seems evident that the reason that Swazi's were calling for an overthrow of the current regime is because of the obvious mal-administration within government, corruption and nepotism. More people bore complaints over their salaries and the economic meltdown. The road leading to the uprising was evidently detailed with a people fed up with a system that showed little interest, if any, in its future. And not surprisingly, these issues experienced by the Swazis are no different from the problems that took the citizens of Libya, Egypt and Tunisia to the streets and to overthrow their governments. Yet in Swaziland, a coup was not realized. Most reason to suggest that the Swazi monarchy is deeply entrenched in the *tinkhundla* system of governance which works hard to conquer the minds of the larger number of Swazis and therefore landing up with only a few that will have disconcerting views about the monarchy (and those few are easily crushed).

According to Foran's (2005) theory, Swaziland presents a perfect case in which a revolution can be realized. Perhaps what would make it a less perfect case and ripe ground for a revolution, is the strong and resilient Swazi state which did not show signs of weakness which would have made it susceptible for overthrow. Perhaps the larger problem was a less prepared democratic movement when taking into consideration the level of organization or lack-of. All of the theories however speak of a "state crisis" or "a breakdown of administrative powers", as factors that allow for a successful revolution. The Swazi state has however presented itself as being exclusive to this type of analysis. We can of course draw a few similarities between the revolutions of the Arab Spring and the failed revolution of Swaziland; 1. The youth were the fore-runners of the uprisings, and 2. the use of social media to galvanize participation. The main and most significant difference is that the uprisings of



the Arab Spring were not announced, which is perhaps a huge mistake that was made by the leaders of the Swazi Uprising; the announcing of the uprising months before it happened and the subsequent details provided (date, time etc.) served to prepare the state well enough as it began training its soldiers and setting up to intimidate the Swazi people through various methods. The state prepared so well that even the Finance Minister, Majozi Sithole, was able to confidently say that they as a country were not anticipating what was happening in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya.

As so stated earlier, following the news of an uprising looming on the Swazi soil, the government took measures to safeguard and protect the monarchy. The regime made all efforts to instill fear amongst the people and as well intimidate them into absolute obedience to the King's word and rule. People were publically warned and threatened not to take part in any demonstrations for they would be severely punished and those demonstrations would be crushed by armed forces. People were further kept on their toes by the active security forces that searched all round for anyone, even remotely suspected to be involved in the campaign for the uprising. Everyone was said to be "a suspect until proven otherwise." The 2006 constitution of Swaziland declared all political parties in Swaziland as terrorist organizations and the 2008 Suppression of Terrorism Act broadened the definition of 'terrorism, so much that the legislation of Swaziland gave way for the police and security forces to exercise unlimited power in ensuring that the peaceful demonstrations of April 12, 2011, did not happen or become successful (Kenworthy, 2011).

### **Day of Uprising**

Many people, especially those who formed part of the leadership of democratic groups, unions, organizations and parties, could not see the day of the uprising as they were either detained, prohibited from leaving their homes or simply blocked from entering city centers, where people had planned to organize. Speaking from the point of view of the student movement, Palesa Dlamini, the current Secretary General of SNUS, says that with the talk of the uprising, they, as a student body, saw it as a chance to do something as a collective with other pro-democracy groups. She says that it gave them hope and that they further resolved to join in on the uprising. She says that as students and young people of Swaziland, they wanted to have their voices heard and taken into consideration when addressing the problems of the people of Swaziland. The night before the said uprising, Palesa Dlamini tells this dissertation

that police and soldiers entered the University of Swaziland (UNISWA) premises and patrolled all night to make sure that no meetings were held or any plans executed. She says that that night they retired to bed early and rose the next day (April 12, 2011) to make their way to city centers, specifically Manzini town, where they would begin their demonstrations. The SRC had organized and hired busses to pick up the students and take them to their destination but on the day of the uprising, Palesa says that no busses were willing to be hired by the student movement and transport them. Their next option was to use local kombis, fill themselves into all of them and travel as normal passengers headed to town. They did that and when they arrived at the bus stop, they packed themselves in all the available kombis and a fleet of them followed each other to town. But as they loaded themselves onto the kombis, Palesa says that she noticed how some police that were there took down the registration numbers of the kombis that they climbed on (Palesa Dlamini, 2014).

On their way to Manzini, they came across a roadblock near a township called Mhlaleni. The fleet of kombis was stopped and all the students were ordered to get off and were immediately shoved inside a huge police truck. Palesa says that the police drove around with them for possibly thirty minutes whilst some police would intimidate and insult them inside the truck. They were then taken to the police headquarters in Manzini, where they had dumped everyone that they had collected on the streets and around town. When they arrived there, Palesa says that they found that the cells were full and so they could not be loaded off and taken in and arrested. They were kept in the truck; whilst inside the truck, they heard the singing of struggle songs by the people already inside the cells. Palesa says that their singing woke something in them whilst inside the truck, they felt hope again and were shaken out of their fear which had been instilled by the police. They joined in in song and created so much noise inside the truck and had the democratic voice once again united. She said that that moment gave them so much hope and lifted their spirits. From that, the police decided to drive away with them again and this time took them back into the university and locked all the gates, locking them all inside the university grounds. No one could leave nor enter the university throughout the day. “So from that, we could not take part on the ground, in the uprising” (Palesa Dlamini, 2014).

AnonymousJTS says that she was on her way to Manzini on the day of the uprising, coming from the south in a small town called Big Bend. “On the day of the uprising I was in Swaziland and travelled from Big Bend to Manzini. Along the way, the kombi I was in was stopped and searched. Even our handbags were searched, we were never told what it was the

police were searching for that could fit in kombi boots and handbags” (Anonymous JTS, 2014).

Musa Sifundza, a leader in the teacher’s union, SNAT, said that before the uprising, as known leaders of Pudemo, Swayoco, SNAT, SNUS, etc., they were under constant surveillance and the intelligence branch was all over them as there were roadblocks all over. He says that he was in his local area of Siteki, in the Lubombo region (which is the south part of Swaziland) and says that as the progressive movement on that end, they had to meet as a group and discuss what issues they were engaging on, on that particular day of the uprising. On April 12, 2011, security had been severely intensified which meant that people were met with the difficulty of moving around. Sifundza says that the people from his region could not get out of Siteki and when checking with others in other regions, found that they were stifled by the intensified security. “What we then did was regroup in one of my friend’s office to further discuss on the status quo... We did not completely give up as we felt that the uprising or the demonstrations should not be a one-day activity. So we sat and developed a programme moving forward. We received phone-calls from others in getting feedback and the issue was that the state had beefed up its security to its maximum level. So we did not get the chance or opportunity to get into the main town and bear witness to the events that were planned out on the day” (Musa Sifundza, 2014).

Wandile Dlodlu, a democracy activist on many fronts, says that the state was preoccupied with intimidation and constant surveillance. The state forces were heavily armed and managed to instill fear amongst the people. It also made it difficult for anyone to move around and get into city centers. “I tried to get to Manzini where demonstrations were set to begin but I could not succeed. The result was that I spent most of my day at the Mbabane police station with a number of union leaders and other activists of the democratic movement. We were held there; I was with a comrade when they forced him and myself into a police van and together we were held with many others for most of the day. We were never told the reasons behind our detention but we were kept there for the whole day of April 12, 2011 (Wandile Dlodlu, 2014).

Mlungisi Makhanya, who sits on the executive of Pudemo, reiterates Manqoba Nxumalo’s revelation to this dissertation that the date ‘April 12’ was always commemorated following a resolution that came from a Pudemo congress. He says that on that date, it was decided that the story of how the Swazi regime tuned itself into a dictatorship, be told to have every Swazi

in order to spread awareness. The aim was to mobilize international allies, have border blockades and hold lectures where possible. He says that with the year 2011 and what he saw as being different from previous years, was that for the first time in April 12 since the Pudemo resolution, there was little activity on the ground due to the soldiers and police that were roaming the streets. “I was doing my share of work where I was deployed as a Pudemo member to conscientize the masses about the significance of April 12, and the further need for mobilization in campaigning for democracy. Our activities were not much successful as most of us were detained and blocked from reaching set destinations. We had planned a border blockade but we did not even make it to the border” (Mlungisi Makhanya, 2014).

Musa Hlophe, the coordinator of the Swaziland Coalition of Concerned Civic Organizations (SCCCCO) says, “The whole thing was contained; the system knows where Musa lives and other prominent and known leaders. Police arrived in our homes, turned our houses upside down searching for incriminating evidence against the state and we were further told to stay home. I, for instance, was under house arrest for the whole of April 12, 2011, together with my family. It is unfortunate that the planned uprising was contained and did not measure up to the noise and the hype created by the SSN and exiles in South Africa. The noise on the social media space was completely detached from what happened on the ground in Swaziland and that speaks to numerous other concerns about the tactics of the leadership of the uprising and I suppose lessons to be learnt, in retrospect” (Musa Hlophe, 2014).

On the day of the uprising, Manqoba Nxumalo, a then Daily Maverick journalist reported that the Swaziland Solidarity Network’s spokesperson had confirmed that some key figures of the movement that had been arrested, were released and that the whereabouts of others that were detained, were then known (of which their lawyers could visit them on the following day). Some of these key figures included: Maxwell Dlamini (president of the Swaziland National Union of Students); Simanga Ginindza (Deputy Secretary of both the Swaziland United Democratic Front and the Swaziland National Union of Students) and Sifiso Mabuza (The Swaziland Youth Congress deputy president); (Nxumalo- Daily Maverick Swaziland correspondent, 2011).

Manqoba interviewed activists that had been released and gathered information revealing that they had been tortured. The SDC spokesperson, Mary Paia, stated that before she was bundled into a police van, she was first punched and kicked and following her arrest, was subjected to a two-hour long interrogation. She was quoted saying, “After the interrogation, I

was strictly warned to desist from my activism, and the station commander stated that they would do everything possible to find some incriminating evidence so that I can be arrested and imprisoned because I was proving to be a very painful thorn in their behinds...I was also given a 'friendly' warning that my safety cannot be guaranteed.” Manqoba reported that Paia had decided against any legal action, considering that the judiciary is appointed by the King and that so often, the outcome of such cases are predictable (Nxumalo -Daily Maverick Swaziland correspondent- 2011).

In the evening of the uprising, Manqoba reported that activists and journalists had gathered to make an assessment of the events of the day. As it were, people had been said to have regrouped in Manzini town and in several church buildings. And although many people had been abducted and tortured, unions had agreed to continue the strikes on the following day and that the activists had not yet yielded to the state’s brutality. The police were reported to have used teargas and rubber bullets to disperse demonstrators. The police were also reported to have arrested anyone wearing red t-shirts, signaling that they were unionists. Hundreds of protesters were prevented from entering city centers; the police blocked the teacher’s headquarters on the morning of the uprising. The estimated number of people that were supposedly prevented from demonstrating were between 100 and 300 (Nxumalo (Daily Maverick Swaziland correspondent), 2011).

Speaking to Manqoba Nxumalo, two years after the uprising, he recalls that laws were created that went in so far as prohibiting people to meet in groups of three. He also reiterates the challenge that demonstrators had in getting into town and says that had it not been for the intensity of the state forces, the uprising would have had a much more significant turnout and perhaps a successful one at that. “I remember I was in a group of six, just a little outside Manzini, on the outskirts of the town. I was with other comrades, planning and strategizing on our next move with the heightened security. As we were in conversation, police came. We immediately ran in opposite directions but unfortunately we could not get too far away for they caught us and took us to the Manzini Police Station where we were detained. We arrived there to find more comrades that were taken in. The police interviewed the lot of us, one by one, I suppose to deliberately delay our release so to keep the street free of demonstrators. Their strategy worked. The state refused us to assemble. April 12, 2011, saw very few people on the streets. But had they allowed us to assemble, I am certain that the turnout would have been very different from what it became in 2011” (Manqoba Nxumalo, 2013).

## **Reasons for the Unsuccessful Uprising**

It is evident that the quickly planned uprising was easily and just as quickly stifled by the intense presence of the police and soldiers that roamed the streets, day in and day out. It goes without saying as well that people were thus easily discouraged from taking part in the demonstrations through the intimidation that they witnessed and experienced from the police, which began early, way before the day of the uprising. The media as well had issued out warnings from government, threatening to “deal” with people who dared to demonstrate. Stories of leaders of parties and unions were shared to further express the level of seriousness that came from the government. Up to this stage, we have come to be able to set out significant problem areas that contribute to the failure of the Swazi revolution. Firstly, the major blunder made by the leadership of the uprising was announcing the revolution. This factor also makes it difficult for one to give a satisfactory comparison between the Swazi Uprising and the successful revolutions of the Arab Spring. The dynamics are completely different; further distinguished apart by the political systems that may serve to determine the nature of the people of the country and their behavior (as in the case of Swaziland). Also, how does one assign a theory that is most suitable in depicting the case of Swaziland when conditions made by all theories are present in her case and yet her government remains intact and stronger in its character? Seemingly, we are again taken back to what may seem to be the complex system of Swaziland, which is difficult to untangle as it has the reinforcements of culture and religion working steadily to keep the citizens at bay.

The leadership is also another problem area- that there was no clear leadership proved problematic as people on the ground went about haphazardly without any direction or coordination from a leadership. We have already gone through the lack of international pressure on Swaziland and the unfavourable allegiance of the military. What also comes out from this chapter, is the suggestion of adventurism from the Swazi youth that began this uprising; that the seriousness and potential of the revolutionary moment was let down by an unplanned movement which had no clear strategies and plans of execution. On the other hand, one cannot merely dismiss the case of Swaziland because of its hasty decisions and perhaps ‘opportunistic venture’ but rather applaud the risks taken and moment seized. The repressive nature of the Swazi state is expressed in Sipho Jele’s funeral that witnessed more than 500 police present and thus leading to the postponement of the funeral itself. The case of Maxwell Dlamini is another case that displays not just the repressive nature of the Swazi state

but also the unjust political system that governs the people.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **THE AFTERMATH**

“It is important though to remind ourselves that real democratic power lies in being able to mobilize at factory, office and community level, and that this is most effective when opportunities are created for substantial engagement to enhance class confidence and deepen class consciousness. That’s why ‘face to face’ discussion, not Facebook messaging!” Stephen Faulkner (Coordinator of the Swaziland Democracy Campaign), 2011.

This chapter will take to look at what happened after the uprising; its successes and failures. This section will also consider what possible future Swaziland may have; whether or not political/democratic change is feasible for the near or distant future in Swaziland. This chapter is also preoccupied with distinguishing reasons for the failure of the Swazi revolution. In the first part of this chapter, I argue that the Swazi regime’s brutality intimidated people from partaking in the events of the uprising and that this character trait of the monarchy largely serves to disway the progressive movement into galvanizing and achieving support for a political transition in the country. I argue that in the ‘lessons learnt’, the announcing of the uprising can be viewed as the initial failure of the revolution Swazis hoped for. And yet regardless of the failure of the uprising, there were successes that the leadership could point out. In the second part of this chapter, I take to consider a possible future for the country. I argue that a democratic transition for Swaziland will be very challenging for the progressive movement to achieve, but that it is for the opposition to establish a solid national movement that incorporates significant members of the population in order to become broad-based.

#### **After the Uprising and Lessons Learnt**

“Nothing happened. On the next day the streets were quiet. There were no demonstrations and people tried to continue with their lives as though nothing had happened. For the rest of the week of the uprising, towns were filled with police, soldiers and warders, patrolling the streets and doing well at intimidating the public”, says Manqoba Nxumalo. And indeed nothing much happened after the day of the uprising as the rest of the interviewees confess to this truth. Musa Sifundza says that they had felt that the uprising should not be just a single



day of demonstrations but that they should be carried out in the following days and not lose heart. He says that the unionists and party members in his region, had a meeting to plan a way forward. They developed a programme that they would execute moving forward. However, due to the intense security that was spread all over the country, those programmes were never executed (Musa Sifundza, 2014).

The April 12 demonstrations seemingly served to galvanize and incite not just those who were already in the democratic movement but as well ordinary people who joined in on the mass demonstrations. Although the uprising was then concluded to have been a failure as the democratic movement was unable to overthrow the regime, as that was their ultimate goal (Maxwell Dlamini, 2014). Palesa Dlamini recounts successes of the uprising; she says that importantly, the uprising raised consciousness about the date “April 12” to the Swazi people inside their own country and also raised consciousness about the injustices of the Swazi system of governance. Palesa says that the demonstrations also gave people a chance to come out with their grievancies; it provided a platform to critically assess the political sphere and system of governance and to as well debate issues. More than anything, Palesa Dlamini says that she noticed how the demonstrations served to open up opportunity for those who felt that they wanted to make a contribution towards the struggle for democracy. Another major success that she highlights is that with the coming of the uprising and its ending, the brutality of the regime was exposed- the fact that the police would randomly abduct people, throw them into their trucks and drive far off with them and drop them into forests, leaving them to find their way back to their homes, revealed to the normal citizen that the Swazi system can be unjust on-top of its brutality. Palesa says that it is an utter shame that the democratic movement was unable to topple the current regime as it is still left alone to invest in and perpetuate the passive nature of Swazis, which is largely due to their fear of the repressive regime. Palesa suggests that it is due to the manipulations of culture and religion that the Swazi government is able to breed passive citizens. (Palesa Dlamini, 2014).

Musa Sifundza says that the reaction of the enemy to the news of an uprising brought out the real character of the Swazi regime and that counts as a success because that picture of the regime was exposed for the whole world to see. However, Sifundza notes that what may count as a failure for the democratic movement is that it realized that it is not quite able and nor is it in a position to push so far as to realize political successes. He says that the level of activism amongst the Swazi people is still lacking. He says that the main issue lies within confronting the enemy because as soon as the enemy shuts a few doors, the democratic

movement is easily and quickly stifled. He continues with that they realized after that, that the movement had a problem with infiltrating people from critical areas such as the rural areas where most of the population of Swaziland is located (Musa Sifundza, 2014).

“The fact that the country was on its toes; that 12 April 2011 was not a normal day, in fact the whole week. The fact that soldiers, police, warders filled the streets searching every person and every bag, made a statement and got everyone talking. For us that is a success.” Dlodlu stated that the patrols around the country communicated to the nation and to the world that Swaziland was a police state, undemocratic and repressive. He says that the police were very rough with their searches and that one could spend hours in a roadblock. “It was not normal roadblocks- everyone in any particular vehicle would be ordered out of the car and the car would be thoroughly searched. Bags would be emptied and searched. People were arrested without being given any explanation, they were questioned over the books they read (especially if they were deemed to contain ‘unfavourable’ political content) and over the choice of colour in their clothing items (red was and is viewed as a colour symbolic of parties and unions), even if they had no print on them,” continued Dlodlu. He emphasizes that “all of this craziness” was a success for them because it got people talking and that also the international community got to see the real Swaziland (Wandile Dlodlu, 2014).

Dlodlu states that what was very impressive for him was that regardless of the brutality of the Swazi regime, there were still some Swazis that forced their way onto the streets. There were those that risked so many things by shunning the warnings that came through newspapers and the radio. Dlodlu says that this showed commitment and determination from the citizens and that moving forward, the movement will have to work hard at sharpening the people’s will to risk because there are far too many people that tread carefully whereas that does not help the situation. “We need more people to risk, the challenge is in how to work the determination”, said Dlodlu. He says that as of yet, the leadership and the whole of the progressive movement has not yet been able to unite forces as the conditions may demand and states that for the progressive movement to be effective, they must enjoy some level of unity. In retrospect, Dlodlu notes that they are still lacking on that front. He also cites the monarchy’s manipulation of culture and religion to call people into complete obedience to the king. (Wandile Dlodlu, 2014).

The rhetoric of the use of culture and religion in maintaining obedience and silence amongst the Swazi people is a common and constant feature in almost all the interviews. Some

interviewees refer to the annual *incwala* ceremony. Pius Vilakati (2013) clearly stated that religion and culture are manipulated into serving the interests of the King of Swaziland and that those two elements work together in sustaining the monarchy. Wandile Dlodlu says that even though the determination of the people still needs to be worked and sharpened, the consistency of the monarchy to galvanize people within cultural and religious events is very problematic as the minds of the Swazi citizens are constantly convinced of the “natural” state of the monarchy and of the king. He says that yet another solid strategy must be developed by the progressive movement to counter this systematic conquering of the minds of the Swazi people (Wandile Dlodlu, 2014).

Maxwell Dlamini says that for the first time, they were able to draw the attention of the international community. He says that no country has an interest in the issues of Swaziland because it has so little to offer, especially where resources are concerned. But then with the uprising, the internal struggle of the people of Swaziland was exposed for the world to see (Maxwell Dlamini, 2013).

Musa Hlophe is fixed on failures as he states that there are more lessons to be drawn out there. He says that a contributing factor to the lack of mobilization on the ground was that there were divisions that existed on the ground that derailed demonstrators. He says that in as much as there was no set and obvious leadership of the uprising, there was the question of who would claim victory had the uprising been a success and who would be to blame had things gone terribly wrong. “And that is where problems really began. Having the leadership either house-arrested or detained, further separated people on the ground and offered little confidence for the people to continue and face the enemy without relenting”, said Musa Hlophe. Larry Diamond (2000) would specifically take issue here as he places emphasis on not just a vibrant and active civil society but also the importance of a clear and concise leadership that will drive the movement into their realizing their goals.

Overall, Hlophe is of the opinion that the failed uprising showed that Swaziland is not ready for a revolution. He reiterates words from Zwakele Nsibande and states that the system of Swaziland would have to still be more ruthless and actually start to systematically kill people or detain them for long periods of time and perhaps when people begin to hurt everyday and hurt the most, perhaps then would they understand that the current regime must change. Zwakele also says that he wishes that the monarchy of Swaziland continued to rob people of their basic needs, so much that they become more poor and experience poverty in a manner that they may have never experienced it before. He says that perhaps only then will the

people of Swaziland willingly and perhaps more easily revolt without so much fear and hesitation (Musa Hlophe, 2013; Zwakele Nsibande, 2014).

Vincent Dlamini, a unionist and a member of Pudemo, says that what he realized was that there was a lack of connection between the hype created on line on the Facebook page and the actual turnout and energy on the ground. He says that on Facebook, the prospect of an uprising existed as something with a lot of power, even on print media yet at the end of the day, the whole execution of it did not capture the hearts and minds of the people inside Swaziland and on the ground. This, according to him, is something to focus and work on in the future (Vincent Dlamini, 2014).

Bongani Masuku, now the Secretary of the International Relations department at Cosatu, also sits in the executive of Pudemo. He has been in exile for fifteen years. He initially laments about the pain of not being able to go back home and shares that he lost both his parents and a brother and has never seen their tombstones nor attended their funerals. Whilst he was still in Swaziland, he had been expelled from the university and together with comrades went on a hunger strike whilst in jail. Since that experience, he now lives with ulcers. He says that he was forced to leave his job at the then Barclays Bank and could not be employed anywhere in Swaziland for a period of about eight years. During that time, he went into full time unpaid political life that landed him in South Africa as an exile (Bongani Masuku, 2014).

However, Masuku immediately takes issue with the term “uprising” and cautions against its usage in the case of Swaziland. He also takes issue with the announcing of the said ‘uprising,’ as Mlungisi Makhanya also does, and sees it as the initial failure of the uprising. “You do not announce an uprising, you build it. No short cut. It takes hard work of building it on the ground. Not announcing it”, he says. Although he was not in Swaziland during the uprising, Bongani shares that news came that the people of Swaziland were less prepared, that the state was more ready than the people were. He says that these are the consequences of announcing an uprising- people get crushed before they can even begin. However, as all of the interviewees are of this mind as well, Bongani Masuku points out that a clear success of the uprising was that the uprising raised the profile of Swaziland and it contributed to people coming out and saying that there is a problem in Swaziland. He says that even though the rest of the world still has not shown interest in doing something to help the progressives, they recognized that there are problems in Swaziland and that the people are desperate for something (Bongani Masuku, 2014).

The fate of Swaziland is one that is quite difficult to clearly lay-out. Whilst the greater concern lies within the economy, contemporary activists advocate for a transition that sees the death of the monarch and the birth of a democracy in Swaziland. The revolutions of the Arab Spring show us the commitment of a people that did not end by creating noise on the social media space, but by also backing it up with action on the ground. One of the major problems with the Swazi Uprising was the feeling that the hype created on Facebook did not match the energy on the ground and what could be said to largely account for that is that the online campaign was run by people who were not in the country (exiles) and therefore some inconsistencies could not be avoided. Important to keep in mind is that Swaziland is not a weak state. The successful revolutions in North Africa were aided by both external and internal factors that weakened the regimes and made them susceptible for take-over- the traditional system of Swaziland was not weakened and stood strong against the threat of an uprising.

### **A Possible Future for Swaziland**

Swaziland is situated between two influential forces, Mozambique and South Africa, and is dependent on both for sustaining itself, especially economically. Swaziland is able to ship its resources through Mozambique to world markets. It is tied to South Africa through monetary agreements and customs. Much of Swaziland's produce is sold to South Africa along with labour. Foreign capital invested in the Kingdom is largely South African. The overbearing influence that these countries have on Swaziland (especially that of South Africa), serves to somewhat limit the operations and options of the monarch (Booth, 1983:128).

The relationship between South Africa and Swaziland has long been in existence and South Africa is the very country that is believed could be influential in realizing a political transformation in Swaziland; but with the recent uprising (2011), the result has been quite the opposite. It took the African National Congress government (ANC- South Africa's leading political party) some time to break its silence over the conditions in Swaziland. The matter of political change in Swaziland has been left at the hands of the ANC's alliance partner, the trade union federation, COSATU. Critics have pointed to the South African government and have depicted a 'non-committed' attitude from it. There are speculations that some ANC members have their own interests in Swaziland and that the president himself has become close with King Mswati III (Mail and Guardian, April 15-20, 2011).

One of the significant factors to consider is that of the reliance that Swaziland has on the South African currency in order to sustain its own. South Africa's great impact on the Swazi economy allows it to exert pressures on the country to transform and make a democratic change possible. Internal pressures could as well be combined with external pressures and a change for the people of Swaziland would not be a far-off idea. A democratic change is possible in this respect (Sihlongonyane, 2003:176). Whilst this relationship between Swaziland and South Africa may offer a ray of hope, it still does not hold any immediate promise for a democratic transition for the country. Sihlongonyane (2003) stated that the dependence that the Swazi economy has on the South African rand is likely to deepen. In 2011 calls were made by the king to the South African government, for a R 2.4 billion loan (which is about \$290 million). The King stated that the loan would be useful in assisting the country with its fiscal problems (*Mail & Guardian*, August 27, 2011). The South African government attached conditions to the loan and the king rejected its political reform conditions. Prince Mahlaba, a traditionalist and senior member of King Mswati's advisory council (the *Liqoqo*), told *The Times of Swaziland* that the *tinkhundla* system of government was not for sale. He asserted that the *tinkhundla* system was given to the Swazis by God (note here the appeal to religion which is said to influence the people of Swaziland into believing that the King and the Monarchy are ordained and designed by God). Prince Mahlaba declared democracy as "nonsense." Reports state that Swaziland had turned to consider other sources for the loan- the Kuwaiti and Qatari monarchies (*Mail & Guardian*, September 09, 2011). How possible is it that the South African government can exert enough pressure for Swaziland to reform its political system? To consider is the general feeling from the leadership of the country, concerning the loan; that since the loan would have been paid back with interest, it was not justifiable for South Africa to attach conditions to the loan (*Mail & Guardian*, September 09, 2011). Perhaps, as suggested by *The Guardian* (2010), "prospects for political liberalization in Swaziland are bleak".

Perhaps important to recall here is the relationship between Swaziland and South Africa in the past, specifically during the rule of King Sobhuza II, which more than anything, revealed the opportunistic character of the Swazi Kingdom (detailed in chapter two). The establishment of the royal party, the INM, was aided by the Pretoria regime and whilst the king played friends with the apartheid regime, it also maintained peaceful relations with the ANC party. Eventually Sobhuza betrayed the ANC in order to seal a land deal with the apartheid government. These past relations do not make it simple to suggest South African or

Mozambican political intervention in Swaziland. As also suggested by John Daniel (2014), the current state of political relations in southern Africa communicates the lack of capacity to initiate change in other countries from a foreign country. He suggests that a guerrilla insurgency is not an option in Swaziland as neither Mozambique nor South Africa would be tolerant of foreign military bases. These limitations point to the people of Swaziland to take matters seriously into their hands and to establish a solid national movement that comprises of a strong civic society that Diamond (2000) describes.

The study carried out by EISA (2009) on Swaziland, concluded with recommendations and emphasized that Swaziland needs strong opposition, which ideally pointed at the freedom of political parties to contest the place of power. The call was also made to underground parties to make the effort to attract support outside of the traditional sphere of Swaziland and to be mindful of the ancient structures of the monarchy and to regard it more than they have (EISA Election Observer Mission Report, 2009). This somewhat insinuates that for any force to overcome the monarchy, they would have to operate from within the structures of the monarchy itself. Sive Siyinqaba Sibahle Sinje, one of the political parties in Swaziland, uses a similar strategy. Speaking at an indaba held in Johannesburg on the 18<sup>th</sup> of August 2012 (hosted by the Swaziland Diaspora Platform) in which all but two or three of the political parties in Swaziland gathered to share their vision of Swaziland. The party presented that they were using the available structures to 'move in'; using the acceptable structures and getting more of their members into parliament through participating in the *tinkhundla* elections (Political Alternatives Indaba- Johannesburg, 2012). The reports state that change will occur in Swaziland through a transformation of the political system into a democratic state, "in the context of the monarchy" (EISA Election Observer Mission Report, 2009). Perhaps what is being communicated by this report is that the people of Swaziland are familiar and have accepted the structures of the monarchy; that they love their King (and maybe do not see an alternative beyond their King despite their unjust circumstances). Perhaps this could be one of the reasons that he remains in power. And so for a party to succeed, they would have to invade the same structures and assume power through it. The strategy used by Sive Siyinqaba Sibahle Sinje may be motivated in this case as they too are of the opinion that the King is still in power because the people of Swaziland will it (Political Alternatives Indaba- Johannesburg, 2012).

An article on Swaziland's struggle for freedom by the British *Guardian* reports that one of the setbacks with the liberation struggle is that it has barely received much media coverage

and especially in the international media. The report suggests that the King's repression in Swaziland is often given little attention due to a bias towards bigger cases of repression and drama in other African countries like Zimbabwe, Somalia, Kenya, Sudan and Sierra Leone. The assumption here is that the international community could perhaps exert some kind of pressure on Swaziland to reform its political structures but the report highlights that the West is limited in what it can do in Swaziland as it does not have much overbearing powers over the King of the Swazis and that the small country does not have oil or precious resources that may motivate external forces to have an interest in the internal politics of the country. Neighbouring African countries are said to "lack the moral authority" to take a firm stand on the situation in the country. The leaders of the neighbouring countries are said to be too corrupt to present themselves as saints in the face of the King of Swaziland and advocate for the implementation of pro-reform strategies that would usher in democracy in Swaziland. The key is to capture the "Swazi sentiment" which supports democratic transition and this should determine the King's acceptance of political reform. The report concludes with that a democratic reform in Swaziland's future is unpromising and that "human rights activists face a lonely, protracted and uphill battle against an obstinate and ruthless monarch" (The Guardian, August 8, 2010).

The 2005 Policy Briefing from the International Crisis Group reinforces the idea that there is a need for external intervention into the politics of Swaziland to ensure a return of a constitutional monarchy and an introduction of democracy into the country (Policy Briefing, July 14, 2005). Change of the government system is possible in Swaziland but there are many challenges that even the opposition groups must be careful to consider as they challenge the existing structure. Opposition comes short when it has to specifically challenge "the way of life", the "Swazi family" structure/hierarchy and the "held in trust of the king". It needs to read the *tinkhundla* system as a cultural construction and not a political construction. This cultural construction of *tinkhundla* has as well served as a means for people to strive on and affirm their national identity. Another problem that has been noted about the opposition groups is that they are largely made up of activists rather than politicians. They act as part-time activists whom surface when the state does something unpleasantly striking- Gluckman suggests that this structure will much more likely result in a kind of rebellion rather than a revolution (Sihlongonyane, 2003).

Hilda Kuper says that cultural events such as the *incwala* ceremony bring the people together under their King and unites them, allowing them to appreciate the "nationalising value" of the



ceremony (Kuper, 1947). In this case, as per Sihlongonyane's suggestion, it seems evident that the *incwala* event is one of the cultural ceremonies in which citizens of Swaziland 'affirm' their national identity. This is a challenge for the liberation movement; that Swazis find that they can affirm their being through the structure of the Monarchy which has culture at the center of its activities. The challenge is then for political parties to deal with these culturally-defined identities without offending the people, lest they ward off support for the liberation movement. There are people like Anonymous 1 (September 3, 2012), who accept the King as a father and fail to comprehend the purpose and need for the liberation struggle and this type of Swazi psyche needs attention and careful address by the parties that advocate for a 'better' Swaziland.

The concept of witchcraft does not seem to be a foreign idea in the minds of Swazis and of course, nobody would speak openly about any witchcraft suspicions within national cultural events. Anonymous 4 (September 3, 2012) shared that individuals do understand and know that witchcraft works but that it became complex when it was practiced at a national level over all the citizens of the country<sup>1</sup>. Majola, in Bowles' article, said that it was all good and well that there was support for Swaziland to transform into a democratic state but that internally, they were dealing with a matter that was far too intricate, he said, "The King can turn into a cat or an ant...he can be invisible right next to us right now. I have had friends die this way. Swazis have a secret you cannot beat, they believe in God. But they also believe in the ancestors. The ancestors make the King as powerful as a God." Another one of the interviewees shared that a friend of theirs, who was involved in the liberation struggle, had entered the royal grounds in a bid to hold a discussion concerning the labour movement and that after he had come out of the palace he looked weak and died in the two weeks that followed. He said that "the King and his *tinyangas* sprinkle a circle of powder around the palace... You cross that line and you die." He concluded and said, "This is why the revolution in Swaziland will be so hard...maybe impossible" (Bowles, Foreign Policy, 2012).

The above poses another challenge for the liberation movement. Witchcraft cannot be simply overlooked as a 'myth' because it is clear that Swazis believe that it works. How does the liberation movement deal with the 'dark spirits' that are believed to keep the monarchy in place? How do political parties purpose to gain the support of people that are manipulated through religion and culture? These are important questions that the liberation movement

needs to ask and find effective responses to. It is evident that there is no clear-cut solution for the future of Swaziland. The problem of the Swazi monarch changing into a democracy is much more complex as the situation runs deep into culture which has stirred up feelings of nationalism amongst the population. Within culture is also the aspect of witchcraft which has been shown and discovered to be very influential in the Swazi psyche. Also to consider is that the strengthening of the Swazi monarch began decades ago during the rule of King Sobhuza II and so the roots of an authoritarian regime have long been in existence and therefore making a political change, a deeply-rooted challenge. However, it goes without saying that a multiparty democracy is feasible for Swaziland, should the right forces come together and strategically and the will of the people be known. Without a doubt, the road towards this reality will be a challenging one.

What comes out in this chapter is that all of the interviewees agree that the main success of the uprising was that it put Swaziland clearly on the map and further exposed its character and ruthlessness to a world watching. The role of culture and religion is referenced frequently and this should perhaps signal its significance in understanding the case of Swaziland. Foran (2005) and Goldstone (1991) both agree to the importance of these elements in making sense of struggles and why a revolution may or may not occur in a given country. Something else that came up is that simply, the events of April 12, 2011, showed that Swaziland is not at all ready for a revolution. Two interviewees suggest that it would have to be a case of the regime being more ruthless in order to push people to the edge, up to a point in which they willingly and easily revolt. The word is that after the 12<sup>th</sup> of April, 2011, nothing happened, that people continued on as though nothing had happened. Tarrow (1998) speaks of “sustained” activity so perhaps the case of Swaziland is immediately disqualified from having a revolution as there was no sustained activity. What seems to be another major set-back is that no real national movement exists in Swaziland; a national movement that can be seen to be continuously adamant and active in motivating for a political transition in the country. Foran (2005) and Skocpol (1979) suggest that revolutions are rapid and violent take-overs of government. This was not the case in Swaziland. The regime was not conquered nor replaced as stated by Walt, that revolutions see a complete replacement of the old regime, by a new one. There was no rush or rapid movement that could have caught the regime off-guard. The planning that was done was done in the open with the regime impatiently waiting to retaliate and put an end to their plight.

Xolani Simelane (2007) suggests a few critical issues that challenge any opposition movement in confronting the Swazi regime. The first of these is the reality of a small proletariat which is no more than 100 000 and is employed by government. Those working for private companies are no different as the private companies are partly owned by the regime through *Tibiyo takaNgwane*. The problem with the proletariat is that they are constantly monitored by members of the royal elite that are placed in both the public and private sectors to guard against dissent. Members of the royal elite are usually princes and princesses or loyal chiefs. Their existence controls and manages potential threats to the state through close interaction with the proletariat. This makes it difficult for employers to stand up against their employers and especially government. Another problem area is the working class that has appeared to be increasingly divided. When political parties were banned, trade unions and civic organizations were left unbanned. Political organizations used these unbanned platforms to push their agendas. Infighting occurred as a result and served to divide the working class as some resisted an outright political agenda (Simelane, 2007).

Richard Levin (1997) states that opposition to the regime has often lacked sufficient planning, has not been organized and has not shown to ever be united and that because of these factors, no serious opposition has yet risen up against the royal regime. The oppositional forces that exist are exclusively made up of the middle class and urban members of society which Levin suggests are not enough to change the status quo in Swaziland. For the democratic movement to solidify itself and become broad-based it would have to gain the support of the peasantry. Simelane (2007) says that the inability of oppressed structures to unite under a single banner against the regime has accounted for their failures in creating any significant change in the Swazi political system. For the democratic movement to succeed, Simelane suggests that all oppressed and exploited classes should unite with the peasantry as it constitutes a bulk of the Swazi population. Importantly for the democratic movement is to engage on the political system in order to unite in one voice that calls for the same demands. This collaboration and unity clarifies the cause and directs the steps of a movement.

Stephen Faulkner (2011) suggests that a Facebook mobilization was not the key to galvanizing support for a successful revolution. He reiterates Bongani Masuku (2014) who said that a revolution is planned and hard work goes into it. It is not merely announced. Faulkner says that what is most effective is “being able to mobilize at factory, office and community level” and that this serves to deepen “class confidence” and “class consciousness.” As suggested earlier, the movement in Swaziland can only hope to succeed if

it is to establish a national movement that will commit to working hard and laying down the necessary ground work that drive their cause. It is clear that the progressive movement in Swaziland cannot hope for international intervention or pressures that will serve to weaken the Swazi state into submission. It is them that that can revolutionize Swaziland and turn it into what they wish it to be. A strong national movement that can stand against the brutal Swazi regime is necessary because currently, people are easily intimidated and derailed by police forces.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION

This dissertation, in its quest to closely analyze the causes and consequences of the April 12, 2011 Uprising, has considered numerous aspects of the events of 2011, in responding to the research question. In looking at the causes and consequences of the uprising in Swaziland, this dissertation was guided with this critical question: Why did the revolution fail? Numerous arguments and critical findings were made.

First and foremost, the research findings revealed an actual leadership of the Swazi Uprising, that being Pudemo members who all agreed on the Facebook campaign (it should be made clear that it was not a move that was backed by the entire movement). This also explains that the said 'Jahings Dada' was not the 'mastermind' behind the inception of the Swazi Uprising but that it was on his account that the Facebook group was established. It was a Pudemo resolution to commemorate this date every year, and thus the members in question would be more conscious of its significance as it is marked on their calendar. The strategy to not expose that Pudemo members had initiated the uprising was perhaps for the reason that the party is the most demonized in Swaziland. People are constantly warned not to take part in Pudemo initiatives. The Terrorism Act of 2008 specifically banned people from wearing Pudemo-branded shirts or otherwise politically affiliated items of clothing. However to note here is that this leadership was not obvious, did not intend on being known and so we still find that the uprising lacked a decisive leadership whose presence would be felt on the ground.

In the chapter of theorizing revolutions, numerous theories were considered and each offered valid and important information on the understanding of how and why revolutions occur. Foran's (2005) theory appealed mostly to the case of this dissertation as it captured existing elements within the Swazi state; elements which are altogether sufficient to realize a revolution in the country. Foran highlights that revolutions in Third World countries have been very rare and that even in their rare occurrence, they have been stifled and crushed by the repressive state. With the uprising in Swaziland, this is what the democratic movement experienced- the Swazi regime unleashed all its forces to crush the protests that were planned to take place (Times of Swaziland, April 2011). Foran considered elements such as dependent development, a repressive, exclusionary, personalist state, the elaboration of effective and

powerful political culture, a crisis arising from economic downturn and a world systemic opening, as characteristics that would realize the revolution of a state. Common characteristics that all the theories considered have in common, are the consideration of factors such as unemployment, poverty, a combination of internal and external pressures, nepotism and corruption, as motivating factors leading to a revolution; factors that create ripe grounds for the overthrow of a regime. It is these factors that propel people to charge the streets violently, demanding that their needs and grievances be attended to. Added years of suffering and being governed by unjust regimes leads people to fighting aggressively for a change of political systems in which rapid and violent revolts occur and the results of these being the transformation of state and class structures (Foran, 2005; Skocpol, 1979). This is what we also learn from the revolutions of Egypt, Libya and Tunisia.

The diverging point for Swaziland is that whilst indeed the relevant elements existed and still do so even today, the same or similar results as the revolutions in North Africa were not realized. I raise a couple of arguments in chapter one. Firstly, that the theoretical framework is not entirely enough in providing us with a good understanding and way of explaining what might have exactly happened in Swaziland, in 2011. The material helps us understand how revolutions work. A deeper understanding is suggested to be found in the chapter of the political system of Swaziland which depicts the web that the opposition movement finds itself in, perhaps unknowingly or unconsciously at that.

The section on the Arab Spring highlights a few pointers that signal factors that contributed to the failure of the Swazi Uprising. We learn that a clear leadership, vibrant civic society and consistent national movement lacked in the Swazi context and is therefore necessary should the democratic movement hope to achieve anything affecting the current political system of government in Swaziland.

In chapter 2, the political history of Swaziland was considered in detail in order to provide a glimpse into the structure of the Swazi government, how it governs and relates to its people and how complex the structures that are in place are. Whilst it was obvious that the political system of Swaziland is intricate and exclusive, it also revealed the 'repressive, exclusionary and personalist' element that Foran suggests as a motivating factor for people to want to topple the existing state. Even with this revelation, what perhaps makes the case of Swaziland a whole lot more intricate, is the interplay between religion and culture in the governing of people and maintaining their obedience in so far as not revolting against the state. Foran

(2005) and Goldstone (1991) in their theories suggest that ideology and culture promote state breakdown. This however has not been the case in the context of Swaziland. What we in-fact come to realize is that culture works hand in hand with religion in reinforcing the power of the Swazi monarchy. That actually the case of Swaziland sees an obvious manipulation of culture and religion in convincing the citizens of the country that the place of the monarchy and the position of the royal family was and is designed natural.

The research also revealed that leading to the uprising, the repressive element of the Swazi state shines through and what ultimately stifled the protests scheduled for April 12, 2011, was the level of preparedness of the Swazi regime. From the moment it took heed of the threats of the uprising, it began to prepare itself by further training its army and increasing on its arms. As interviewees respond to this dissertation, they clearly state that the Swazi state became more brutal, initially beginning by issuing threats and then going into public spaces, conducting random searches, staging abnormal roadblocks and interrogating people. This evidently sent through a wave of fear in the country and AnonymousBN stated, “Swaziland is effective in instilling fear amongst its people and that fear is immediately and deliberately interpreted to mean that the people of Swaziland are a happy and peaceful people”. This dissertation does argue that announcing the uprising was a blunder in this respect.

On the day of the uprising, there was no rapid and immediate overthrow of the Swazi regime, as Foran’s and Skocpol’s theory would assume of how revolutions occur. This largely speaks to how the leadership of the uprising went about in organizing for the uprising. Due to the level of preparedness of the state, there was no revolution at all that happened. The democratic movement and all its affiliations were crushed before they could even begin with the planned demonstrations. Large groups of people from every region of Swaziland were prevented from entering the main city centers, specifically Manzini town, where the demonstrations were set to take place. People in their cars and buses were turned back from driving into town, people standing in groups of three or more were immediately detained and roadblocks were put in place, every car searched. Participants of this dissertation suggest that the state was very effective in derailing the proceedings of the day as the bulk of the people were detained throughout the day at police headquarters and when there was no longer space, people were kept in police vehicles and driven around with and sometimes dumped at far off places and left to find their way back to where they stay. Key figures of the democratic movement that the state is clearly aware of were forced under house arrest for the whole of 12 April, 2011. Musa Hlophe (2014) stated that having the known leadership absent on the

day served to subtract on the confidence of the people on the ground. The state had begun well before the uprising, detaining key figures and sending out clear warnings to the rest of the people, not to partake in the protests.

Following the uprising, no activity ensued. Manqoba Nxumalo (2013) shares that life went on as normal, as though nothing had happened and that people tried to move on in that same light. In retrospect, the democratic movement can only celebrate the success of firstly, shaking up the regime and secondly, playing a part in the exposing of the brutal, unjust and problematic system of government. All the interviewees of this dissertation highlight this aspect, that what they can boast about is that the real Swaziland was exposed to a world watching and alert to Africa as a whole. Although none of the interviewees seemed to want to speak of the main failure of the uprising, it is evident that the basic failure was that there was no revolution in Swaziland; no rapid and immediate transition of state and class structures. The regime was left intact and in actual fact, even stronger, resilient and more brutal. Perhaps this could be said to be one of the harsher consequences of the attempt at an uprising in the country. The regime became more alert of activity that they had previously overlooked. All strikes are dealt with harshly even if it is just teachers demonstrating for pay increases. Mlungisi Makhanya (2014) said that in 2012 and 2013, the commemoration of April 12 in Swaziland has since been challenged by the state as the army and police forces are always on the streets, patrolling and preventing any activity that seemingly attracts the attention of people.

There are a couple of reasons that could be considered in explaining why the uprising in Swaziland failed. Firstly, as some of the interviewees have already stated, it was the announcing of the uprising that resulted in a clear fail at the attempt. The announcing of when the uprising would be; the date and time, and where it would begin from, was not a plausible strategy. This allowed the regime time to prepare well before hand for the looming threat and to position itself in all the relevant places in order to contain the uprising. And it succeeded. The day of the uprising saw a well-prepared state, much more prepared than the democratic movement itself. The democratic movement began being stripped off of solid key players in their plight, months before they staged the uprising. This was an injustice to them and a lesson to be learnt is that one does not announce an uprising and as Bongani Masuku (2014) stated, an uprising is a result of hard work on the ground which is kept secret from the enemy.



The division on the ground, within the democratic movement, is the second reason that contributed to the failure of the uprising. This speaks to the lack of leadership as well. This is what Musa Hlophe (2014) referred to when he spoke about the situation that existed, that in the heat of it all, there was the question of who would claim victory had the uprising been a success and had it failed, who would bear the brunt of the loss? Hlophe says that those divisions were evident from the very beginning, where groups were ambivalent about responding to journalists about the planned uprising and not showing to be neither here nor there.

A third reason for the failure of the uprising is the disconnection between the hype on social media platforms and the actual mood on the ground. The sense is that the SSN based in South Africa and run by exiles, sold the democratic movement short by creating an extreme hype and feeding international media with false energy that did not exist on the ground- the greater effects of this was a state that armed itself for war when it faced an unarmed people. There were great inconsistencies with even what international media anticipated. Led by the energy and vibrancy on line, it was disappointing to find an unmatched energy on the ground, in Swaziland.

A fourth reason that the uprising did not succeed was that there was no state actively supporting the plight of Swaziland; there was no solid backing from a centralized and organized force such as a post-revolutionary state which would serve to guide and protect it, as Foran put it. Perhaps also, this factor is not an absolute precondition for a country to have a successful revolution as is the lack of a combination of external and internal pressures that strengthen the call for a revolution even amongst the people themselves. I argue that the Swazi opposition needs to look within themselves and put in hard work in developing and establishing a strong national movement. This is however not to denounce international intervention but rather to state that Swaziland can evidently not rely on external elements to succeed into a democratic dispensation.

Significant conclusions that this dissertation can make is that firstly, the Swazi Uprising itself was not planned. It was a mere hijacking of the political season in Africa and this is why it is assumed that it was an adventurous youth that took to seize the moment of political uncertainty over the continent. I also argue that this adventurism was not a bad and worthless initiation in that there was purpose behind it and the result of the attempt at an uprising were the successes of drawing attention to the real problems of the Swazi people. However, the

lack of planning also speaks to the failure of the uprising, the fact that there was a rush in galvanizing masses to join in on the demonstrations. More time could be spent in galvanizing people and conscientizing them about the conditions in Swaziland.

The failed uprising served a couple of purposes. It indeed put Swaziland on the map and conscientized, not only apolitical Swazis, but even the world at large about the Swazi political system and the struggle of the people. It allowed a space into which people could debate different views and share their thoughts on the status quo in Swaziland. It seems strongly suggested that as well, the role of culture and religion in Swaziland should be taken seriously as it affects the way people think and perceive situations. The role of witchcraft, within culture as well, needs to be considered with much more carefulness as it may prove to be a sensitive and intricate area to venture into. The hope is that the democratic movement took away important lessons from their failed attempt; lessons such as the need to spend time in winning the support of people through direct methods of education and further connect with them at a personal level. People seek understanding more than anything. They will support an agenda that they understand and that which is relevant to their everyday lives. The argument could come that perhaps as well Swaziland is not ready for a revolution. The bulk of the people, which are in the rural areas, need to be reached and brought into the picture that the democratic movement envisions. The numbers are lacking in the democratic movement. “April 12” needs to be taught in accessible methods and understood by the normal person tilling the land on their homestead.

The *tinkhundla* system is seen to maintain strict control of the people in the rural areas. The urban areas are brought under the control of parliament which sets itself as a modern form of control. *Tibiyo takaNgwane* seems to be in control of the ‘nation’s wealth’. The role of religion reinstates the King and the monarchy as purposed and planned by God. Culture unifies people and works to affirm the national identity of citizens, as has been noted with the *incwala* ceremony. Witchcraft is tightly fitted into cultural events and research in the *incwala* ceremony has revealed that the King rules with a ‘dark spirit’ which is annually reactivated-kept alive and effective through rituals carried through at the *incwala* event.

The main challenge is for the liberation movement of Swaziland to confront all aspects of the Swazi psyche and all the challenges that the political system presents. The roles of religion and culture are significant in understanding how Swazi citizens are won over to support the monarchy. Political parties of Swaziland should be aware that the King’s desired national

church will rise as a political construction, of which perhaps people will be oblivious to. Up until pro-democracy movements can unlock all aspects of the Swazi psyche and the intricacies of cultural practices (and as well how they are intertwined with religious beliefs), they will fail to gain critical mass for a revolution. The opposition movement needs to grow itself by incorporating significant large groups such as the peasantry and the civic society needs to understand its significance and the critical role that it has to play within the progressive movement. The hope is that this dissertation has been able to do what it set out to achieve; to reveal the cause and consequences of the April 12, 2011 Swazi Uprising.

## APPENDICES

# **Participant Information Sheet**

### **Project Information**

**Title of Research Project:** “What were the causes and consequences of the April 12 Uprising in Swaziland?”

**Principal Investigator:** Nqobile Mkhathswa, MA student at the University of the Witwatersrand- Politics.

**Supervisor of Research:** Dr Joel Quirk (Lecturer at The University of the Witwatersrand; 011 717 4358; [Joel.Quirk@wits.ac.za](mailto:Joel.Quirk@wits.ac.za))

### **1. PURPOSE OF THIS RESEARCH STUDY**

You are being asked to participate in a research study designed to make an assessment of the April 12, 2011 Uprising in Swaziland. And specifically, you are being asked to speak about your knowledge of the political history of Swaziland, the lead up to the uprising and the aftermath.

A summary of the research dissertation can be availed to you if you wish.

### **2. PROCEDURES**

In conversation, you will be asked to share your experience and interpretation of Swazi politics and especially the causes and consequences of the April 12 Uprising. The interview should not run for more than one hour.

### **3. POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORT**

The study in itself does not involve any immediate risks to your well-being or safety. However, because of the political situation in Swaziland, censorship of people and sensitivities relating to the release of “sacred” information, you may want to decide to claim anonymity. In that case you will have an assurance of confidentiality- which can be guaranteed in the form of anonymity. Where anonymity is requested, the researcher will ensure that no information that indirectly identifies you will be included; age, location, race, career etc.

You are free to choose whether or not to participate in this study. There will be no penalties attached to non-participation.

Any new development during the study that may affect your willingness to be associated with the project will be communicated to you as will any intention to publish the study.

### **4. OWNERSHIP AND DOCUMENTATION OF RESEARCH COLLECTED**

With your consent, the interview will be recorded electronically for the purposes of accurate reporting. The data acquired will be used and securely kept by the investigator (i.e myself), in a password protected digital archive.

## **5. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Your identity and records that identify you will be treated as confidential if desired. As per your preference, the results of the study (whether published or not) will not give your name or include any identifiable references to you.

Recordings may be shared with the supervisor of this research, but all records will be kept private in so far as permitted by law.

## **6. TERMINATION OF RESEARCH STUDY**

You have every right to decline to answer to certain questions- you will not be penalised in any way for this. You can also decide to withdraw from being a participant in the study itself, at any time. You will not be penalised in any way for this either.

Should you wish to terminate your involvement in the study subsequent to the interview please contact me at:

Telephone no. +27 789 905 715

Email: [nkmkhatshwa@yahoo.com](mailto:nkmkhatshwa@yahoo.com)

## **Consent Form**

Nqobile Mkhathshwa is carrying out a study on: “**What were the causes and consequences of the April 12 Uprising in Swaziland?**” I am aware that my participation in the study is entirely voluntary. I may withdraw from the study at any stage and I can choose not to answer any question. I am also aware that I remain anonymous and my identity will never be disclosed to any third party. The information that I will disclose will only be accessed and used by the researcher and her supervisor.

By signing this form, I certify that **Nqobile Mkhathshwa** has explained the research project and that I consent to participate in it under the conditions described above.

## **AUTHORIZATION**

I have read and understand this consent form and the contents of the Participant Information Sheet, and I volunteer to participate in this research study. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form.

Participant Name: .....

Date: .....

Participant Signature: .....

Date: .....

Principal Investigator Signature: .....

Date: .....

## **Anonymity**

I would like to remain anonymous: yes ☐

no ☐

## **Consent for Audio Recording**

The interview can be recorded: yes ☐

no ☐

## **PROPOSED QUESTIONS**

\*The data on human research participants will be collected by means of informal interviews which will be open-ended. Below are semi-structured questions that will be asked.\*

1. What is your assessment of Swazi politics? How would you describe the Swazi political system?
2. Why do you think democracy has not taken root and worked in Swaziland?
3. In comparison to the South African history of apartheid, would you say that Swaziland has had any significant political events that have shaped the history of Swaziland?
4. What political changes would you say that the Swazi nation would love to see and why?
5. How do you feel about the role of the monarchy?
6. What role do you think the press plays within Swaziland and its' political system?
7. What is your history and/or involment of Swazi politics?
8. Talk me through the Uprising. How did events build up to the Uprising?
9. What happened on the day of the Uprising?
10. What was your experience of the day?
11. How do you interpret the response from the state of Swaziland?
12. How would you describe the proponents of the Uprising?
13. Tell me about the aftermath of the Uprising, what happened?
14. What have been the consequences of the Uprising? Achievements?
15. Do you think that Swaziland is ready for a multy-party democracy?
16. What direction or future do you envision for Swaziland?

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